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of Argyle



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Others in Preparation



“ANNE WAS STANDING WITH PALE FACE AND QUIVERING
LIP WHERE HE HAD LEFT HER.”—*Page 139.*

ANNE OF ARGYLE

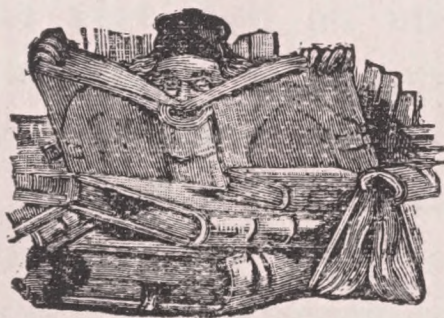
OR

CAVALIER AND COVENANT

BY ✓

GEORGE EYRE-TODD

AUTHOR OF "BYWAYS OF THE SCOTTISH BORDER," THE "SKETCH-BOOK
OF THE NORTH," ETC.



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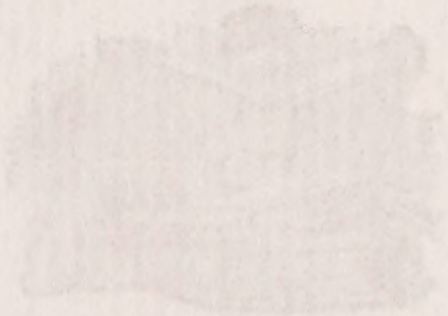
LINE OF ARGYLE

CAVALIER AND COVENANT

GEORGE ESTABROOK

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ANNE OF ARGYLE;

OR,

CAVALIER AND COVENANT.

CHAPTER I.

“Child Rowland to the dark tower came.”

King Lear.

AT morning service on the second last Sunday of June, in the year 1650, an unusually large audience had assembled in Glasgow Cathedral. Not that any irregularity was wont at that period to be noticed in the ordinary weekly attendance of douce Glasgow citizens at church. All persons, indeed, not incapacitated by age or infirmity, were under the necessity of appearing each Sunday without fail in their respective places there on pain of summons and fine by the kirk-session. But on this particular occasion it had been spread abroad that the discourse was to be preached by Dr. Zachary Boyd, the reverend

and redoubted minister of the university in the town, and as it was known that he had just returned from the Convention of the General Assembly then sitting in Edinburgh, it was expected that he would have a word to say and pregnant news to dispense regarding the movement on foot for bringing the young Prince Charles to the throne of Scotland. For the ministers of those days, as is well known, were not only the spiritual admonishers and guides of the people, but in convocation assembled, as the most formidable estate of the realm, were the wielders of political power as well, and might therefore be looked upon as the most general, though not perhaps always, the most trustworthy, sources of political information. On this Sunday of June, therefore, in the year 1650, the people, attracted more, it is to be feared, by the prospect of hearing news, than of profiting by spiritual exhortations, had gathered in from many outlying parishes to hear the discourse of the reverend doctor; and the incomers, adding their numbers to the assembly of regular attenders at the place, filled the cathedral church to overflowing.

Stirring news was expected, and the staunch Presbyterian burgesses were all anxiety to learn the safeguards which, in case of the Prince's com-

ing to the throne, were likely to be taken to secure the permanence and domination of their own particular form of worship.

Among these burgesses, however, were not a few who, while for prudential reasons conforming outwardly with the views and proceedings of their Presbyterian neighbors, were none the less anxious for tidings which should bring hope of some relaxation in the straightlaced order of things of late so rigidly enforced. By these it was expected that the assumption of power by another King Charles would bring with it some release from the necessity of obeying the strict rules of conformity laid down by the assembly of divines; and their hope was therefore for news of the Prince's arrival. For already that Presbyterian party which had signed the Solemn League and Covenant as a declaration of freedom of conscience and a protest against religious oppression, had proved itself when in possession of power as rigid and intolerant as its prelatic predecessors.

But whatever these dissenters in the cathedral congregation might think and desire, they took good care to make no display of their difference of opinion. In outward appearance they were as dismally garbed and as strictly conforming in every respect as their more sincere if less genial

neighbors. The terrible fate of the great Marquis of Montrose and his friends was too recent for the most enthusiastic well-wisher of the Cavaliers to make more than an inward protest against the sombre form of dress and worship to which the lieges were compelled. It was therefore with no small amount of astonishment that, when the church had all but filled, there was observed to enter and seat himself before one of the great stone pillars, in full view of the congregation and of the pulpit, a young man in the unmistakable dress of the aristocratic party.

The sanctity of the place and the strictness of principle of those assembled did not prevent a whisper going round the congregation upon the appearance of this person ; and while stolid Presbyterian elders were seen to frown heavily, and to cast threatening looks in his direction—being doubtless inclined to regard his presence just then as an omen of the possible advent to power again of the “Malignants,” as the Cavaliers were called, there were not wanting secret glances of admiration from under the snood of many a burgess’s fair daughter.

It was not that the color of the stranger’s dress marked him out for observation. This was as dark and as sad-toned as the dress of those about him. It might, indeed, have been taken for the

garb of one in mourning for some near relative. Nor did his face, though he could scarcely be more than twenty years of age, wear the bright expression or the glow of health which usually, from their outdoor habits of life, bespoke the youth of the King's party, and which might have been supposed an attraction to maiden eyes. His features were pale, not to say careworn, and in his look there was to be detected a mournful, weary expression strange in one so young. His dress, however, was of the unmistakable cut of the Cavaliers, and his gloves, and, when he drew these off, the rings which sparkled on his fingers, with, above all, the long chestnut hair flowing down upon his shoulders—vanities, every one, abhorred by the ascetic party in power—bespoke him nothing less than a Royalist and a Malignant of the most aristocratic type.

Meanwhile the stranger appeared to be as unconscious of the dark looks with which he was favored by the elders of the congregation as he was of the attention bestowed upon him by their less politically-minded wives and daughters. Entirely indifferent, evidently, to the good or ill-will of the individuals with whom he found himself rubbing shoulders, he appeared to scan the congregation far and near as if in search of some one or something, and, apparently not having suc-

ceeded in his search, his features resumed their expression of abstracted melancholy.

Presently, however, the speculations of the congregation were recalled to a more legitimate channel by the entrance of the minister. Clad in the full black gown affected by the followers of the doctrines and church discipline of Geneva, and preceded by the bedellus with Bible and Psalter, he ascended the few steps, and took his place in the pulpit.

A man, one would have guessed, somewhat past middle age, there was about his eyes and mouth an expression of concentrated purpose well befitting the character of one of those churchmen of the time, whose ambition, like that of Israel's prophets of old, was as much to rule the nation as to teach the faith. Dr. Zachary Boyd was one of those ministers of whom Scotland then bore so plentiful a crop, who hesitated neither to use their pulpits nor the words of Holy Writ itself for the furtherance of their views of statecraft.

This tendency very shortly became evident when his eyes had detected the representative of too obviously Malignant opinions who had ventured to intrude himself within the church. The garb of the stranger in such a place, and particularly at such a crisis in political affairs, was indeed

exactly the thing most likely to call forth the reverend doctor's peculiar powers of hortatory rhetoric. He was like the war-horse that has scented battle, and whatever the original purport of the service may have been, there could be no doubt that it was now inspired by very definite political feelings. The psalms given out to be sung by the congregation assumed a singularly warlike and uncompromising complexion, being chiefly such as besought the aid of Heaven against the proud and "such as do lying vanities regard;" while in the prayers a sufficiently definite abhorrence was expressed of alliance with those who openly bow the knee to Baal. But it was when the discourse itself was reached that the particular turn of the worthy doctor's sentiments became most conspicuous. His text was chosen from that place in Scripture where the Israelites call aloud to Samuel, "Nay, but we will have a king to reign over us." A parallel far too obvious to be missed lay here, of course between the prophets who had successfully governed the chosen nation before the cry for a king, and the ministers of the Kirk in Scotland whose voice had of late been all-powerful in the management of State affairs. Details were not wanting of the success which had attended the warfare of these ministers against the enemies of Israel—that is, against the

enemies of the Presbyterian form of Church government; and for proof of the heaven-sent nature of the clerical authority, had not the Lord but lately delivered into their hands that chief Malignant and troubler of the people, that Philistine of the Philistines, James Graham, called the Marquis of Montrose?

At this allusion to the capture and execution, scarcely yet a month ago, of the Great Marquis, arch-enemy as he had been to the Presbyterians, a visible stir of awakened excitement passed over the whole congregation. As for the young Cavalier stranger, his originally almost pallid face suddenly flushed crimson, his eyes flashed fiercely upon the speaker, and he half rose from his seat. But, mastering himself, though evidently with a strong effort, he let himself sink back into his place, and his features became, if anything, paler than before.

Without appearing to notice this gesture, however, or the involuntary exclamation which accompanied it, the preacher went on. The hearts of the people, he said, hankered after a king. Already they had forgotten how the Lord had led them by His prophets to triumph over their enemies. Already they had forgotten the tale of bricks, and how they had been led out of the Egypt of a Popish bondage; how before now

they had groaned under the oppression of princes of this earth, till the Lord delivered them by the sword of the godly. But their eyes were blinded that they should not see, and their ears were stopped that they should not hear ; and now, when Philistines of the south, the men of Cromwell, pressed sore upon them, they had lifted up their voice again and cried aloud for the anointing of a king. A king, therefore, in their high places they should once more have, to be a scourge of their sins—a king of the royal house. But first that king must throw down the strange altars of his fathers, and become a partaker of the circumcision with the elect ; and woe to him if he returned to the sins of his fathers !

After this fashion the preacher made it known to the worthy burgesses of Glasgow that Charles II. was to be allowed to assume the throne of his ancestors in Scotland, but only under such agreements and limitations as should make him a king in name rather than reality, and should leave the actual power as before in the hands of the Presbyterian leaders. This, in fact, was the policy formulated by the party at whose head was the crafty and diplomatic Marquis of Argyle. By this means they thought to secure the domination of the Presbyterian form of Church government, both against the Episcopal leanings of the royal

house and the inroads of the English Independents. In this mind, accordingly, they insisted upon the King's putting apart from himself all such as were known or supposed to hold "Malignant" opinions; and hence the denunciation with which the Reverend Zachary Boyd proceeded to wind up his sermon that June afternoon against Malignants of all types generally, and the Royalist Cavaliers in particular.

Though a king should once more be anointed over the elect, none must be left to bow the knee in the house of Rimmon; all toleration of Malignancy was but a joining of hands with the Delilah who should betray Israel. Wherefore it behoved the nation to gird up its loins and make diligent search, and in whatsoever high places the Agagites be found, let them be plucked thence, and, if need be, as the prophet of old hewed in pieces the false prophets of Baal, even so let these be hewed in pieces, and their flesh given to the fowls of the air.

At this last denunciation, given with all the thunder and fire of one who had the behests of Heaven to enforce, the listeners seemed to perceive another allusion to the recent fate of Montrose, and a perceptible murmur of acquiescence overran the congregation. But the service was over, and after a somewhat long-winded benedic-

tion the crowd began to stream out through the kirkyard, which then, as now, surrounded the cathedral.

With his velvet bonnet pulled low over his face, leaving nothing to give a clue to his thoughts of the moment but the pallor of his lower features and the tight compression of his lips, which his slight moustache was not yet heavy enough to conceal, the youthful stranger proceeded rapidly towards the street.

He was not, however, permitted to escape thus without attention. The soberer part of the late audience, indeed, despite the inspiring eloquence of the sermon they had just heard, would have let him pass with no further molestation than an audible observation or so upon the sin of vain show, and the wrath awaiting those who turn not their feet from the paths of the ungodly. But the danger of figurative eloquence in a public place is that it is likely to be understood literally by a certain part of its hearers.

In the present instance this is exactly what had happened. So it came about that the young stranger had scarcely passed the gateway of the church when he was accosted by a fellow-worshipper. The assailant was one of those rack-brains familiar enough in every community, possessing just sufficient method in their madness to

be able to make some sort of living for themselves, while smiled at compassionately by those around them as "half-naturals." The stranger, however, could not be supposed to know all this, and when he suddenly found some one step in his way, and, with solemn remark about "vain-glory in the courts of Zion," stretch out a hand as if to snatch the white ostrich feather from his cap, the most natural thing in the world was that he should throw up an arm to defend himself. But Willie Shaw, for so the lack-wit was called, had been ill-advised enough to bring his physiognomy closer than necessary to the scene of action, and the wrist of his opponent, in the sudden gesture of protection, unluckily caught him on the edge of his most prominent feature, which promptly spouted forth a shower of blood.

There is but a step between the fool and the fanatic. In this case the sight of blood was enough to raise the cry that the Malignant had struck and wounded the "puir nat'ral," and in a moment there was as much hubbub in the cathedral precincts as if some one had been slain. The first man to offer violence to the stranger was a red-haired, yellow-eyed fellow who, rushing forward with clubbed stick, let drive a blow which must inevitably have at least stunned its victim, had the energy with which it was wielded

not first taken effect in the small of a worthy burgess's back, who in the sudden rush to the spot had been thrust rather nearer than he wished to the scene of fracas. With a roar of mingled pain and terror this worthy dropped to the ground, and shouted that he was slain. Others, however, pressed forward, and though the stranger seeing the bodily danger he was in, swept out his sword and set his back against the stone pillar of the gateway, things might have gone hardly enough with him. But the commotion on the highway side, and the roar of the good man who had so unexpectedly suffered in the small of the back, with the shouts of "Down with the Malignant!" which now began to rise, had already attracted the attention of the town-guard, by no means unused to such emergencies. Several of this force accordingly came suddenly upon the scene from the castle-yard at hand, and as the crowd scattered to the right and left before them, and the young Cavalier was the only person discovered in a suspicious attitude, sword in hand, they did what is frequently done in such emergencies—valiantly arrested the unoffending party and carried him off to the lock-up.

Explanation, in the circumstances, the stranger saw was useless, and perceiving, after a glance at their weapons, that resistance to the armed emis-

saries of the law could not but be disastrous, he suffered himself to be conducted across the somewhat dilapidated drawbridge of what had once been the palace-castle of the Bishops of Glasgow.

Once within the courtyard, however, a sudden recollection seemed to strike the prisoner. He stopped and seemed disposed to dispute his incarceration. But his escort had no intention of permitting this, and he had only time to cast a hasty glance at the general surroundings of the place, when he was thrust through a low doorway and found himself a prisoner in the basement chamber of Bishop Cameron's Tower.

Remonstrances were in vain, and the only information vouchsafed to his inquiries was that the time being sabbath, and the magistrates of the city engaged in the observance of the Lord's day, he must needs wait till the morrow to have his case examined by the worshipful Bailie Lightbody. Meanwhile, the prisoner was fain to consider it a fortunate thing for himself, as well as for the Royalist prospects altogether just then, that these rough-handed watchmen did not consider it part of their duty to inquire into his personal effects. As it was, the donation of a gold Carolus or two sent the fellows off satisfied that they had acquitted themselves sufficiently in the discharge of their duty, and procured for the

prisoner presently, notwithstanding the scruples as to observance of the Lord's day, a flask of fair claret and a plateful of fresh-made girdle-scones.

CHAPTER II.

"I ha'e layen three herring a-saut ;
Bonnie lass, gin ye'll tak' me, tell me now ;
And I ha'e brew'n three pickles o' maut,
And I canna cum ilka day to woo."

Old Song.

ONE of the most marked characteristics of the strict Presbyterians of the time of which we write was their stern observance of the sabbath. It was not that the people were in any way insincere in what they did ; the fault, if it was one, lay in the logical seriousness with which they carried out a particular form of doctrine. Tinctured with that gloomier Calvinism which insisted on regarding God's fair earth as but "a desert drear," and bent apparently upon earning a future life by making the present one as miserable as possible, they carried out the letter of the Mosaic law to its extremest limit. Not only did they refrain from touching any work whatever, even of the most necessary sort, on Sunday, but they scarcely dared to speak. When they did open their lips it was to discuss such cheerful subjects

as the doctrine of election or of original sin, and if a child, in the innocence of its heart, was heard so much as to laugh it was instantly promised condign punishment on the morrow, and threatened with the terrors of "the bottomless pit." During the hours of Kirk service the streets were scoured by a vigilance committee,* and any delinquent found straying from the ordinances was attached for fine and admonition by the session. During the remainder of the day the heads of families in their dwellings, from which the sunshine was carefully darkened out, employed the time to edification by catechising the members of their households. To venture abroad for a breath of air in the evening was an undreamed-of desecration, and the only sound to be heard then in the streets was the swell and cadence of a psalm tune here and there from some dwelling where the family was engaged at its devotions.

A most unusual circumstance, therefore, it was when the clatter of a horse's hoofs on this Sunday evening was heard coming up the Bell o' the Brae,

* The officers of this committee were called Compurgators, and were appointed by the magistrates. Their function came to a sudden end about the middle of last century. A gentleman then arrested by one of them on Glasgow Green took the magistrates to law, when it was decided that they had no right to exercise authority in that way.

as the upper part of High Street was called, and a loud rattle at his door startled the landlord of the Zion Inn.

This worthy and his fortunes had shared the vicissitudes of the times. In the years before the troubles of the late King Charles, this inn had borne the name of the Bishop's Arms, and, as the best-appointed house of entertainment in town, had done a roaring business with the free-living Cavaliers who frequented the castle, and who passed to and fro on affairs with the Royalist gentlemen of the west. But with the Civil War and the ascendancy of the ecclesiastical party the fortunes of the house had suffered change. Since the defeat of Montrose at Philiphaugh, and the death of the King, all the free-handed gentlemen of the royal faction had either fled abroad or lay crippled at home under fines of the Parliament. Custom had dwindled, and mine host beheld the cobwebs grow rather thicker than he had intended on his hogsheads of ripe Burgundy and Canary. It was in vain that he had changed the name of the house. The thin-blooded followers of Argyle, he declared, wanted no mellow vintage to help them in their psalm singing. And so, grown cadaverous where he used to be plump, and with the ruddy bloom which used to tinge his cheeks transferred to the tip of his nose, poor Spigott

had fallen to a somewhat peevish humor, and more frequently than formerly, in absence of other patrons, had taken to consoling himself with the contents of his own cellar, for the departure of the "good old days."

Such, indeed, if the truth must be told, was his occupation now when he was startled by the "birl" of an unceremonious riding-whip on his door.

"Wha the deevil—ahem! I should say," he exclaimed, "What son of the Gentiles can this be?" And setting down the tankard he was in the act of raising to his lips, he proceeded, with steps not altogether of the steadiest, down the low passage which led to the street. "Wha are ye," he added, before undoing the door, "that comes here on the Lord's day disturbing honest folk at their devotions?"

"Open the door to Neil Guthrie; send a boy round for my horse; and damn your devotions!"

"Wi' the greatest pleasure i' the world," returned Boniface, with a sudden access of energy; and undoing the door and issuing out, he added in an accent of surprise, "Neil Guthrie! Eh, man, little did I think to see you again at the auld Bishop's Airms! They said ye had been killt i' the wars o' Montrose."

"Killed or alive, I'm at your door again, ye

see. And if that boy o' yours wad only come to look to my nag, I'd let ye perceive presently that I can strip a mutton-rib and drink a stoup yet, wars or no wars."

"I maun e'en be stable-lad mysel'," returned the landlord, a trifle ruefully. "The Bishop's Airms, or I should say the Zion Inn, has fa'en on ill days. But step up to the parlor, an' help thyself to what's there. His sister's guid-son shall ne'er pay lawin' in Sandy Spigott's house. I'll see to yer nag."

Ten minutes later the landlord hastened to rejoin his guest. The latter, a sandy-haired, muscular young fellow of twenty-seven or so, had apparently proceeded without delay to make himself at home. On the table already stood a bountiful providing of cheese and bread, and a large quaich or drinking-cup newly emptied, while from the kitchen at hand could be heard the fizzling of meat being "brandered" over the fire. Whatever his vicissitudes since last visiting his good-uncle's house, it was evident that the newcomer had not forgotten how to forage for himself.

"Weel, lad," cried the old man, wiping the harness oil from his hands with a wisp of hay, "what's come o' ye for the last five years? What's yer news? An' what brings ye now to

this end o' the country? I wad ask ye to drink, but I see ye've fended that for yersel'."

"For the last five years I've been on the continent o' Holland," replied the young man. "My news is that Prince Charles—that is, King Charles the Second, is landed in Moray; and my errand in the toun o' Glasgow this day is—business o' my ain. As for the empty quaich, if ye are anxious to drink the King's health never let that stand i' the way."

"The King's health!" cried the other with sudden enthusiasm. "God bless him! that we will, and i' the best liquor o' the house. The King in Scotland! That's news to hear! The King in Scotland!" And proceeding to a closet at hand he brought forth a flask covered with valuable dust.

"His Majesty's health! God bless him!"

The toast was drunk more than once, with this difference of effect, that whereas the landlord did nothing but drink, and so became by degrees more enthusiastic and less steady of hand and speech, the younger man merely used the liquor to wash down the more substantial parts of his meal, and was no whit affected. In this proceeding Guthrie made his refreshment serve more than one purpose. Taken with food in its legitimate way the wine could only render his own

supper more generous, while the encouragement of drink served admirably to loosen the wits and open the secrets of his companion.

"A quiet town ye seem to keep here now of a Sunday night," he exclaimed by the way presently, as he set down his bicker; "not a wench to touch the cap to from the Drygate port to the door of the Bishop's Arms!"

"Soho! that's the airt o' the wind, is it?" said the landlord, leaning back in his chair with a look of tipsy surmise. "They said it was the flichtiness o' a lassie sent ye awa' wi' Montrose when he plundered the Glesca bailies efter Kilsyth.* Like enough it's the thocht o' a lassie that brings ye back to the Tounheid now."

The sturdy man-at-arms looked up with a defiant laugh, which was no more than half successful.

"I left St. Mungo's five years syne," he said, "to see the world and seek my fortune under a gallant leader when I had the chance. As for the

* Upon the victory of Montrose over General Baillie at Kilsyth, the magistrates of Glasgow, taking the bull by the horns, invited the Marquis to town. A plague was then raging in the city, and Montrose remained there only one night. In the morning before leaving he demanded and received from his hosts for the purposes of the King a sum of £50,000. His opponent Lesley, coming afterwards, took from the magistrates £20,000, merely the interest, he said, of the sum they had given Montrose.

lasses, ye may know that where I ha'e been there were steps as light and faces as sweet as any i' the Townhead o' Glasgow. Besides, Bessie Frew, for it's her, doubtless, ye hint at, was married, I suppose, soon efter I bade her fareweel."

"Na, lad, na; ye're wrang there. The lassie's for the seekin' yet. No' but what there ha'e been stout callants speirin' at her, but she has said Nay to them a'. It's as weel, though, that yer thochts ar'na in her direction, for Andra Frew's keeper o' the toun prison now, and for a follower o' Montrose like yersel' to step through that gate efter Bessie wad be to set his craig i' the hangman's collar."

"Ye forget, my worthy uncle," said Guthrie, "that the King's landed i' the north."

"The King may be landed," answered Spigott, with a wag of the head, "but he's no' at the lug o' the law yet. It was but this morning that a braw young gentleman—his like hasna darkened this door for months—left his beast here, and, for a' I could say, went in his plumes and ruffles to kirk, and the sermon wasna five meenutes endit when they clapt him under Andra's lock and key."

"A Cavalier gentleman!" exclaimed Guthrie, with sudden attention. "What might his name be?"

“Names ar’na just the first things mentioned i’ these fine hing and quarter days. Everybody’s no’ a hair-brained Neil Guthrie that comes bawlin’ his title to be made immortal by the hangman at ilka inn door, and the young gentleman, for a’ his beardless face, had seen something o’ the warld’s ways ere this, I warrant, for there was a sword-cut dimple on his chin when he spoke. That’s no’ to say, though, but what ye’re safe enough in Sandy Spigott’s house, so bide where ye are. I’ll let ye see anither flask o’ the best presently, and ye’ll let’s hear yer news. When did the King land? How did ye escape when Lesley’s men made flags and popinjays o’ their prisoners efter Philiphaugh?” *

“I’ll tell ye that when I come back,” said Guthrie, rising and brushing the last crumbs of oatcake from his moustache with one hand, while with the other he took up from the table the light sword he had laid there on sitting down to eat. “Just at present I’ve a bit o’ business to see to. I’ll be here to help ye wi’ that second flask in half an hour.” And leaving his mystified host in a state of half-tipsy conjecture, he clanked

* After the surprise and defeat of Montrose at Philiphaugh, the Covenanters confined their prisoners in Newark Castle close by the battlefield. Here, a few days later, contrary to the usages of war, these unfortunate captives were put to death.

through the stone passage, and let himself out by the stable-yard behind the inn.

It was not for nothing that Neil Guthrie as a boy had scudded barefooted about the Glasgow streets summer after summer. In consequence of these mischievous roamings he now knew every back lane and close in the burgh, and could have made his way from one end of the town to another without once showing face in a main thoroughfare. To the same early experience he owed an accurate knowledge of the state of the walls and moat of the old Bishop's Castle, which then stood at the head of the High Street.

After sieges and vicissitudes of many sorts, with a history dating from the days of the patriot Wallace, this fortress-residence of the bishops and archbishops of Glasgow had, since the Reformation, been suffered to fall gradually to decay. During the episcopate of Archbishop Spottiswoode, it is true, in the beginning of the century, it had been repaired and restored to something of its former condition; but by the time of which we write it had again become sadly dilapidated. To such mean uses may the most historic structure come that this palace, which had been a constant bulwark of the Regency in the minority of James V., which had sheltered the heads of kings, and of churchmen sometimes more power-

ful than kings, and which had been designated in the Privy Council Registers of Mary's time "ane of the principall keyis of the cuntrie," had now come to be looked upon as a common quarry by the town's masons, while the only part of the structure not entirely ruinous—the building at the southwest corner known as Bishop Cameron's Tower—was in use as the burgh prison.

More than once had Neil Guthrie in his truant days suffered castigation at the hands of the town officer for presuming, with like-minded friends, to navigate the once formidable castle moat upon a few deal boards. More than once he had escaped such a castigation by leaving his frail raft in the official hands and taking to the water itself. Accordingly, he now knew the exact spot at which a part of "Beaton's wall," which had fallen outwards, could be trusted to form a bridge over the unsavory abyss. To this spot he found his way easily enough, even in the darkness, and a few seconds sufficed to find him standing on the narrow plain-stone pavement which ran round three sides of the tower.

At this point the prognostications of his friend the landlord of the Zion Inn ran rather closer than was comfortable to being verified. Guthrie had hardly set foot on the narrow causeway when a door in the tower-side immediately beyond him

opened, letting a flood of light from within strike into the darkness, while the figure of a man came out. Luckily, Guthrie was still in the shadow, and so escaped discovery; but he recognized in the new-comer the burly person of the prison-keeper, Andrew Frew, and he had also time, before the latter closed and locked the door, to catch sight of the prisoner within—the young Cavalier arrested that morning.

The trespasser waited till the heavy footsteps of the prison-keeper died away round the corner of the tower before moving, and it was only when he heard the heavy porter's gate slam in the distance that he advanced to the cell door and opened communications with the prisoner. There was an anxious and prolonged consultation, which apparently led to a resolve for determined effort to free the captive. Guthrie stepped back and examined the door. Originally the paved way on which he stood had been covered in, and by the passage thus formed, the ancient dungeon of the tower, for it was no less, had been reached; but upon the covered way falling to ruins a new and heavier door had been furnished for the cell. Against this iron-studded barrier ordinary means of forcing a passage promised to be of little avail. Upon coming to this conclusion Guthrie communicated the fact to the prisoner within. An-

other plan of action was then apparently determined on. Guthrie stepped back again, and looking up at a window in the tower wall immediately above, at which the shadow of a female could be distinctly made out in silhouette against the curtain, whistled softly a couple of bars of an old Scotch air.

There was a movement of the shadow, the curtain was pulled aside, and the narrow window opened.

"Bessie!" said Guthrie, in a cautious whisper.

"Weel," was the answer, in a sweet, but somewhat uncertain voice, "wha's there?"

"It's Neil Guthrie," said that worthy, boldly. "Come down here; I've something particular to say to ye."

Now, the keeper's daughter had driven her present interlocutor almost to distraction by her caprice five years previously, and she well knew it was her coquetry which had finally sent him to seek his fortune under the gallant banner of Montrose. Since that event she had begun to suspect that in the transaction she had been her own foolish enemy. Of all the town's lads who had sought to "make up to" her since, there was none she could think of beside the absent lover. A moment before Guthrie spoke, indeed, she would have been eager enough to welcome

his return. Now, however—such are the unaccountable ways of women—her old coquetry came back in full force, and she answered saucily :

“Can your business no’ wait? It’s a late hour to ask a lassie out i’ the darkness.”

“E’en bide where ye are, then,” returned Guthrie, carelessly, and began to make for the moat.

But this was not quite what the girl wanted. Five years are a long time to wait for a sweetheart, only to have him disappear again at a word. For a moment she waited, listening, but his footsteps did not cease retreating, then, nearly throwing herself out of the window, she sent after him a piteous “Neil! oh, Neil!”

“Weel?” was all the answer returned, but the footsteps paused in their retreat.

“I’m coming down, if ye would gi’e me time, but ye tak’ a lassie’s word sae short.”

A minute or two later a light step came round the corner of the tower. Neil could not help regretting the darkness, which only half revealed the trim figure and half-defiant, half-reproachful face which came up to him. Five years ago he would have tried to pass his arm round that tight little waist, and would probably have met with a repulse. Now he made no such attempt, and

Bessie, without knowing why, felt conscious of a sudden disappointment. Nothing of this was apparent in her voice, however, as she said, tentatively—

“You’ve come back frae the wars, I see.”

“Ay, Bessie, I’ve come back to ask efter auld frien’s.”

“Oh!” was the reply, lightly. “And a bonnie hour ye tak’ to mak’ your asking.”

“I thought,” Guthrie went on, steadily, “ye might like to ken that I wasna left lyin’ in the holm at Philiphaugh, and that I’m come back frae Holland factor for Montrose.”

“Oh!” The voice was a little less certain now. “And this is what ye maun cry me out i’ the darkness to tell?”

“There was another thing I wanted to ask ye,” said Guthrie, “but that can wait.” Then he added with sudden irrelevancy: “Do ye ken what prisoner that is ye have i’ the dungeon there?”

“The prisoners ar’na business o’ mine,” was the answer, in a tone not without a suspicion that the speaker felt she was being unfairly trifled with.

Guthrie whispered a name in her ear.

“Ye dinna say that!” she cried, and springing to the door she made an effort to get a view, through the keyhole, of the captive within.

"Bessie," added Guthrie, immediately, "I want ye to bring me your father's key for that dungeon."

"The key!" exclaimed the girl, taken aback.

"It hangs," Guthrie went on, "at the back o' the keeper's door. I'll take care that blame falls neither on your father nor on you."

"A fine askin' that," said Bessie, with a toss of her shapely head. "What wad there be to lippen to if the key was ance i' your hands?"

"The word o' the man that's never been but true to ye for the last eight years," answered Guthrie, adding quickly, "But since ye canna trust your lealest frien' I'll e'en fend the matter for mysel'." And turning suddenly in the darkness, he disappeared, leaving Bessie to surprised reflection on the change which had taken place in the character of her once too docile lover.

Meanwhile the latter hastened back to the inn, saddled his own steed and that of the stranger, the only horses in the stable, and filled up his horn from the powder-flask of Spigott, who by this time lay sleeping heavily in his chair. Then he emptied a quaich, by way of stirrup-cup, to the health of his host, and proceeded as quietly as possible to lead the horses up the steep lane behind the inn.

Presently he had the steeds fastened to the

ring by a house door near the castle, and was once more climbing across the moat.

Here a surprise was in store for him. He had hardly set foot again on the plain-stone pavement when he became conscious that the dungeon door was open, and that three figures were standing outside. These he perceived to be Bessie, her father, and the late occupant of the cell; and he was just in time to catch the words of the prison-keeper.

"I broke bread in your father's service," Frew was saying, "when he cam' to Glasgow wi' his tutor, worthy Master Forrett, and it would ill become me to see harm fa' on that father's son."

"You have done a service this night to the royal cause and me," the other answered, "which I may be able presently to repay. Meanwhile I can only offer to you the warmest thanks, and to your winsome daughter this." And at the same moment he pressed a ring from his own hand upon Bessie's finger and a kiss on her startled lips. "But how," he added, "are you to avoid trouble in the morning for your prisoner's escape?"

At this moment Guthrie, with sudden alacrity, stepped forward.

"I'll see to that," he said; and, fastening the door and handing the key to the astonished keeper,



“ ‘IS IT GOOD-NIGHT OR GOOD-BYE?’ HE SAID.”—*Page 33.*

he proceeded to pour gunpowder into the lock.

The late captive was already making his way across the moat, and Frew, accepting the situation, had withdrawn round the inner corner of the tower, when Guthrie, who was not hurrying his work, heard a sigh behind him, and a voice that made him stop.

“Neil.”

“Ay, Bessie;” and he turned round. There was a hand timidly extended to him.

“Good-nicht!”

He took the hand. “Is it good-nicht or good-bye?” he said.

“Good—nicht!”

In another moment she lay in his arms, lost, while he took sweet vengeance on her ripe, wilful lips; and this time, strange to say, she made no resistance whatever.

“Now run, lass,” he said, releasing her. “I’ll be back gin summer’s by.”

Presently under the dark side of the wall a bright jet of flame shot out, and there followed a crash and a thunderous explosion which shook the five heavy stories of the tower above, as the cell door was blown to splinters. A couple of minutes afterwards the town guard, headed by Andrew Frew himself, came hurriedly round the

corner; but by that time the two horsemen were spurring out of the city at a gallop on the main road leading towards the north.

CHAPTER III.

“Edinburgh Castle, towne and toure,
God grant thou sinke for sinne,
And that even for the black dinnour
Erl Douglas gat therein !”

Ballad Fragment.

FOR the first mile or so beyond the city boundaries the two horsemen continued to urge their steeds at a round gallop, and it was only when all chance of immediate pursuit was over that they fell to a more moderate pace. Up to this point they had hardly exchanged words, but now when it was possible to draw rein and take breath, the lately-escaped prisoner turned to Guthrie, who from the first, it might have been observed, had been careful to ride half a length in the rear.

“You came not an hour too soon,” he said, “and,” he added, smiling, “it is not every man who can call down the powers above in the shape of a pretty sweetheart so promptly on an emergency.”

“Nor, gin it please you,” replied Guthrie, somewhat grimly, “is it just every man that cares to see his sweetheart kissed before his face.”

The young Cavalier laughed. "You must allow there was strong temptation," he said. "Moreover I must say the damsel did not seem over obliged by the compliment." Then pointing to the left, where the chimneys of a house apparently of some consequence were just then visible through the trees, he changed the subject. "Whose place is that?" he asked.

"The House o' Garscube," answered Guthrie, adding in an accent of wrath. "Ane o' the best manors o' Montrose, now i' the hands of a kinsman o' Argyle."

"Already!" exclaimed the other in a tone of strange bitterness; and for some time thereafter he rode straight ahead without again breaking silence.

At last, however, he turned to his companion. "I have a desire to hear," he said, "what you know of the last attempt of Montrose, and of—of the end. You landed with him, I believe, in the north."

"A dark tale it is ye bid me tell," answered Guthrie, "but a tale doubtless ye maun some time hear, so I will e'en do your bidding."

"Montrose, before his ain coming from Holland, as ye will be aware, sent first my young lord of Kinnoull to stir up the Orkneys for the King, then my lord's brother wi' twelve hundred

paid Gothenburgers, to make a landing i' the same country. Nevertheless, when our frigate, wi' the marquis on board, arrived, it was to find the gallant young earl himsel' dead o' a pleurisy, the four hundred men he had got frae his uncle o' Morton sairly scattered, and o' the twelve hundred Gothenburgers sent wi' the earl's brother, hardly ten score men, wi' twelve brass field-pieces, safe landed i' the isles. It was news to make the boldest o' us blench, but Montrose only made haste to land at Caithness. There he set up the twa black mourning standards o' the King, wi' their drawn swords and severed heads, and his ain brave white damask banner, flying the lion rampant for Scotland. At the same time he sent out a proclamation calling on all the gentlemen o' the country not concerned i' the death of the late King to rally to the cause o' Charles II. But the fear o' the Parliament's cruelty was on the cravens, and they kent, besides, the hard marching and little plunder that was to be got under Montrose. So it came about that, wi' ane excuse and another, not a laird o' them all brought his men in to help the cause o' Montrose. Like enough they were waiting for another Kilsyth or Tippermuir ere they would mak' the sign that was asked; but, whatever might be the reason first and last, for all the march through Caithness and

Sutherland, our number wasna the better by fifty poor recruits. Then it was that the marquis bade me haste and come south. I was to raise his ain tenantry about Mugdock and the west, and make the best speed I could to meet him i' the Seaforth country. It was at a glen foot in Strath Brora, where we had camped, that I got his order, and I see yet his stern look as he spoke: 'Give my cousin of Fintrie this ring,' he said, and he handed me his signet. 'Tell him Montrose needs every Graham that can bear arms, and will look for them by the banks of Spey!'

"That was the last word I had frae the marquis. In five days his ring was in Graham o' Fintrie's hand, but even then; though we werena aware at the time, Montrose was past helping. Word came later o' his surprise by Colonel Strachan in Corbiesdale, o' his desperate battle, near single-handed, forsaken by the Orkney men and the Gothenburgers, o' his flight and starvation, and the black treachery of Assynt; and then we knew that Montrose was i' the hands of the Parliament, and that little mercy was to be expected frae the corbie heart of Argyle."

At this point in his narrative Guthrie paused, moved by the appearance of his listener, who seemed deeply affected. The latter, however, recovered himself presently, and though in a low

voice, bade his informant proceed. Guthrie accordingly resumed his account.

“When I saw the marquis again it was a dark day for Scotland and the House o’ Graham. They were bringing him up the Canongate causeway to the Tolbooth o’ Edinburgh. It was said he had been brought out o’ the north clad i’ the peasant’s rags he was taken in, and riding on a shelty pony wi’ his feet tied aneath the beast’s belly. There were some o’ the Covenanting carles i’ the Canongate expected to see him like that, and to hoot at the fallen fortunes o’ their enemy. But the good folk o’ Dundee, for a’ the auld feud that was between them, had clad him i’ the best; and never had the great marquis looked nobler than on the day he rode into Edinburgh on the hangman’s cart. He was unbbonneted, and they had tied his hands that he mightna be able to fend his face if the rabble took to stoning him; but there was only silence and pity as they brought him up from the Watergate; and so lofty was his look that Argyle himsel’, standing at Lord Moray’s window to gloat ower the fallen fortune of the captive he had never dared face in battle, slunk back out o’ sight as he met his een.

“That was on the Saturday efternoon. On the Monday he was before Parliament, and they

say he was used there shamefully. On the Tuesday week I saw him again. It was the last day o' Montrose. None o' his friends had been suffered to see him i' the prison, but I heard he had been plagued wi' ministers bidding him repent for sins he had never committed; and the jailor had been set to smoke tobacco, a thing he hated, in his face, and to ca' him dog and traitor. Yet it hadna been the end, even then, o' the marquis, for some o' us were ready there wi' our lives to rescue his; but the streets were filled wi' 'Covenanting troops for fear o' the townsfolk turning—so greatly had the crowd begun to murmur at sight o' his gallant bearing and cruel fate. A gallows was set double high i' the market-place, and there, so poor was their spite, they made him walk. Yet as he came stately up the street in his coat o' fine scarlet, and silver lace, wi' his ruffles and silk stockings, and his hat in his hand, a hush went before him along the town, and at sight o' his face many were moved to tears. Only one woman laughed. It was the bride o' Lord Lorne, brought there by her gay goodman to see his enemy fall. Some were wondering if they wad suffer it, but Montrose made a speech at the last, a speech ye may have read, for it was taken down at the time. I mind the last words: 'my soul to God, my service to my Prince, my

goodwill to my friends, my love and charity to you all.' The ministers o' the Covenant that had plagued him for a week, refused to pray for him i' the end, so he prayed for himsel'. Next he presented the hangman wi' four pieces o' gold ; and then—then he took his shameful end wi' the brave dignity o' a prince, before God and man."

While Guthrie proceeded with his narrative the young Cavalier had ridden forward in silence, casting an occasional glance at his informant, only to turn away again with a deep and painful sigh. When the tale was finished he remained for some time without speaking, buried apparently in his own sombre thoughts. In this way several miles were covered at a steady pace. Breaking silence at last, however, he began in an altered voice to make inquiries as to the temper and condition of the tenantry on the Montrose estates.

"Would they rise yet, think you, if need were," he asked, "for the cause of King Charles?"

"That," replied Guthrie, "is as it may be. Parliament troops have been quartered on them for months to hinder a rising, and it might be kittle conjuring wi' the name o' Charles ; but if the son o' the Great Montrose was to raise his banner"—here the speaker looked significantly at his companion—"every man would be out ere the sun set."

By this time the horsemen had passed Mug-

dock Castle, the chief seat of Montrose since the burning of Kincardine by Argyle ; and the bridle-path which they pursued, and which indeed was the only road then available, had begun to rise along the side of Dungoin, the rounded summit guarding the western end of the Campsie range of hills. Guthrie had appeared somewhat surprised as Mugdock was left in the rear with no more than a distant survey and a few short inquiries, and he had ventured shortly afterwards to ask the proposed destination of their journey.

“ The King is in Stirling by this time,” was the answer ; “ I am in haste to rejoin him there. If I ride not by the shortest road it is that I would set eyes once more on the fair Endrick valley.”

It was already morning when the travellers reached the village of Killearn, where they proposed to rest and feed their horses, and with the early habits of the time the business of the day in the inn there had already some hour or more begun. The mists still lay white in the strath below, but here the sunshine fell warm on the thatch roofs of the clachan, and from the smithy at hand the first strokes of the anvil had begun to resound.

The kine of the village, lately milked, were moving out with their attendant herdsman to their hillside pasture for the day, and the whole scene

was one of such peace as the inspiration of the hour might have been expected to awaken. As the new-comers approached the doorway of the hostelry, however, they were made suddenly aware of a somewhat strident altercation going on within.

"Since it is thus you receive the proffered ministrations," a monotonous voice was saying, "I will even shake the dust from the soles of my feet and depart from this place."

"You will shake ta tirty sole where it pleases you," came the answer hotly, apparently from the irate landlord; "but you will pay Hamish M'Kean seven white shillin' of lawin' first."

"But I tell thee, man of Belial," replied the first speaker, "that the laborer is worthy of his hire. Moreover, I am here on spiritual business, to discover the backsliding of this people, and not to be at my own charges."

"And I will tell to you you will not be here at my charges. Seven white shillin', I say."

This was replied to by some quotation regarding scrip and wallet, followed apparently by ocular demonstration of the absence of these necessary accompaniments of travel. Then came a sudden yell, as the thud, thud of a fist was heard going into something soft; there was a hustling and commotion in the passage, and a figure in a black

coat, hatless, and with terror stamped on every feature, came flying head and heels, propelled vigorously from behind, out of the inn doorway, to land on all fours among the horses' feet.

The figure of the landlord appeared on the doorstep immediately behind—a stout, irate little man, in a kilt and an old buff jerkin, the spoil probably of some expedition of the late wars.

“Tak’ tat,” he shouted, shaking his fist at his late guest, “you tat would sup and sleep in an honest man’s house, and pay ta lawin’ wi’ a plessing!” Then, perceiving the new arrivals, he changed his tone readily. “What will be your pleasure, shentlemen?” he said. “Will you be pleased to come in?” Then he nodded towards a gypsy-looking youth chewing a straw at hand as he stared at the strangers. “Ian will take ta shentlemen’s horse.”

While their steeds were being baited with what provender the inn stable contained, and the young Cavalier and his companion regaled within upon such fare—cold mutton, oatcake, eggs, and brown ale—as could hastily be put upon the table by the half-dressed, half-frightened, and altogether inquisitive maid, some renewal of the recent altercation could be heard going on outside. Now and again it would die away, only to be renewed by a querulous sort of supplication couched in script-

ural language, which was met by sharp retort in the vigorous if somewhat curious accent of the landlord, as, apparently, he came and went. Presently, therefore, when the Cavalier, having paid the bill, sauntered to the door to breathe the fresher air outside, and wait for the horses, he was not greatly surprised to set eyes again upon the individual whose undignified exit he had witnessed an hour ago.

The latter, to judge from his appearance and method of speech, was one of these hangers-on—adventurers, who in all ecclesiastical periods have proved only too ready and able to extract a livelihood out of the religious vogue of the day. In the present instance, unfortunately for himself, the self-constituted missionary seemed to have miscalculated and overstepped the area of the particular influence upon which he depended. The Biblical phraseology and half-ecclesiastical appearance which would have been enough just then to procure him not only profound respect but free entertainment in the neighborhood of Edinburgh or Glasgow, were neither regarded nor understood on the borders of the wild Highlands. He was seated now, disconsolate, a short way from the inn door, on a heap of dried turf or peat, the ordinary fuel of the place at that time; and so sorry, apparently, was his plight that he did

not hesitate to appeal to the new-comer, Malignant though he would doubtless at another time have called him, whom he now saw appear on the scene. Advancing with a somewhat grudging obeisance he made known his case.

“Young sir,” he began, “I make bold to ask the offices of a stranger, albeit of another persuasion I, a humble son of the Covenant——”

“A minister of the Kirk, you would say?” interrupted his interlocutor, with a comprehensive look.

“N-nay—that is, not an ordained minister, but a humble missionary of the cause, Aaron Crookshanks by name, come hither to spy out the iniquity of the land, who is made to suffer unjust deprivation—that is, the reavement of a three-pound beast and its apparelling, in the house of the Amalekites.”

At this point the little landlord, appearing upon the scene, broke fierily in with—

“He will be speaking about his horse to ta shentleman, but he will not be speaking about ta seven shillin’ of lawin’ he hass not to pay.”

“Nevertheless,” returned the stranger, whom by mutual consent the two seemed to appeal to as judge, “a three-pound horse and harness appear a large amercement for so small a sum.”

therefore, landlord, upon my advice, you will let Mr. Crookshanks have his animal—but with the condition that if ever he appear again in this corner of the country, spying out iniquity or anything else, he shall lose, not only his horse, but something much dearer to him—his skin.”

At the same time the speaker with a whisper wrought a sudden and wonderful change in the demeanor of mine host. Seizing the hand of his guest, the latter knelt and kissed it in ecstasy. Then dashing quickly into the house he brought forth his wife and daughter, who went through the same ceremony with every sign of awe and reverence. The landlord, moreover, seemed unable to say enough to express his feelings of affection and devotion, and the honor that had been done his house. Mr. Crookshanks, meanwhile, between gratitude for the unexpected turn of circumstances in his favor, astonishment at the mysterious means by which that turn of circumstances had been accomplished, and alarm at the threat with which the offer of relief had been accompanied, appeared also to have some difficulty in suitably framing his thanks.

But by this time the travellers' horses had been brought from the stable, and, mounting amid the portentous whispers of the crowd which had suddenly gathered at the spot, the Cavalier and

Guthrie were presently descending at leisure the hill slope to the north of the clachan.

By this time the morning mists had quite risen from the valley of the Endrick below, and the river could be seen winding its way through the holms of its wooded strath to lose itself in the waters of Loch Lomond some four or five miles to the westward. These blue waters themselves lay in sight, studded with bosky islands, and winding away among the sunlit passes of the mountains. Nearer hand, in the sylvan strath towards which the travellers were descending, azure wreaths of peat smoke could be seen rising peacefully here and there from clachan and shieling, themselves hidden from view among the woods. A fair scene it was in the early June morning, this country of the Graham, with its brown heath and flashing waters, its sunny pastures and its mountain walls.* But apparently it was something more than mere scenery to the foremost of the two horsemen riding down from Killearn. He paused for a moment before turn-

* Families of the name of Graham already, so early as 1650, occupied a large part of the Lennox, from the Endrick eastward to Stirling, as well as southward by Campsie and Mugdock. But it was not till 1682 that the country at the Endrick's mouth, where now stands the chief seat of the Duke of Montrose was purchased by the noble head of the race from the creditors of the last chief of Buchanan.

ing his back upon the valley, as the road trended away to the right toward Stirling. His cheek flushed and his eye glistened at the sight, and when at last he recalled his thoughts, there was a stronger purpose, a bolder resolution in his air. Exclaiming half to himself, "It is a country worthy of a gallant lord!" he touched his steed to a nimble pace, and added aloud to his companion, "We must be in Stirling before noon."

Almost immediately, however, occurred an incident characteristic of the place and time, which not only produced a striking effect in the prospects and feelings of the speaker, but which requires a certain amount of explanation.

CHAPTER IV.

“Berry-brown ale in a birken spale,
And wine in a horn green,
A milk-white lace in a fair maid’s dress
Looks gay in a May morning.”

Ballad.

So late as the beginning of the present century, the shortest route between the Argyleshire Highlands and Stirling or Edinburgh carried the traveller along the southern shore of Loch Lomond. It was the customary route then followed by the judges of circuit passing periodically to and from Inverary. Portions of a road made by General Wade in the middle of last century for convenience of military transit with the West are still in use there ; and still, about the time of the autumn trysts, droves of shaggy cattle from the remote parts of Islay and Cantyre are to be seen making their way along that shore to the great central gathering at Falkirk. All Scotsmen are familiar with the doggerel rhyme which immortalizes the most effective pacifier of the Highlands :

“If you had seen this road before it was made,
You would hold up your hands and bless General Wade.”

The particular road of which we speak was not, it is true, one of the most difficult parts of the general's undertaking, but it forwarded its builder's purpose of pacification as much probably as some of his more arduous engineering efforts. Especially, by increasing the possibilities of rapid travelling, it lessened the risks of attack and plunder by the wild caterans of the neighboring hills. In the year 1650 this was by no means the least common contingency which befell travellers passing through the Lennox, as the district was then called. While they toiled painfully and with care along the rude winding track amongst peat bogs and mossy springs, which was all the road then existing, an excellent opportunity was afforded the inhabitants of the mountains above, who still recognized only the law of the ancient *coir a glaive*, or right of the sword, to descend and levy blackmail at their pleasure. These facts will explain to some extent the circumstance which now suddenly attracted the attention of our two horsemen as they made their way into the valley.

The riders were about to turn into the track which led due east towards their destination, when, behind a belt of natural birchwood which had

hitherto hidden the bottom of the descent, they heard a quick succession of shouts, followed by the discharge of a firearm and the shriek of a female, and almost at the same instant they came in sight of the scene of commotion.

The situation was obvious at a glance. A lady with her escort of men-at-arms had been surprised under the side of a woody knoll; one of her attendants already lay motionless on the ground, other three were on the point of being overpowered by their assailants, while the lady herself was struggling in the grasp of a fellow who only too plainly was endeavoring to carry her off. The horsemen were near enough to perceive that the lady was young and dressed in a style which, apart from the appearance and size of her escort, declared her to be of no mean rank. These particulars, however, were hardly necessary to ensure immediate assistance at the hands of the Cavalier who had just come within sight. The first quick perception of the situation was enough, and with a sudden exclamation of "To the rescue, Guthrie!" he urged his steed towards the spot with all the haste of which the nature of the ground would permit.

His follower appeared in no way so eager to take up the cause of the distressed damsel. His eye, shrewder to note particulars than that of his

companion, had already observed the dress of the attacked party. "It's the Campbell tartan!" he called out warningly. "Little should we be its help, of all folk i' the world!" and drawing bridle he appeared willing to let the struggle be decided without interference. But in another moment, perceiving that his remonstrance was either unheard or unheeded by the ear to which it was addressed, with an exclamation of dismay he struck spurs into his horse, and shouting out "A Graham! A Graham to the rescue!" dashed rapidly after his leader.

The appearance of two additional combatants thus suddenly upon the scene quickly altered the situation of affairs. The would-be ravishers, perceiving themselves overmatched, at once dropped the assault, and picking up the arms and plaids they had thrown down upon beginning the attack, made off among boggy hollows, where they were not likely to be pursued. One only of the assailants continued to persevere after the attempt had been abandoned as hopeless by his companions. That member of the attacking party who had seized the lady, and who, from his dress and the eagle's feather in his cap, appeared to be of rank superior to the rest, now lifted her in his arms, and stepping over the quaking bog upon the tufts or hussocks of grass which here and there

afforded a precarious footing, began coolly, with the agility of a practised mountaineer, to make off with his booty towards the hills. The moment was critical. It was impossible to shoot, as owing to the rapidity of his motions the shot might harm the spoiler less than his burden. In another moment he would have borne that burden beyond reach; and the young lady, herself perceiving her imminent danger, shrieked aloud.

Help, however, was at hand. Spurring his horse to the gallop, in a couple of bounds the young Cavalier had made up with the fugitive. Grasping the latter by the collar he dragged him down upon his back in the morass. Upon this, the Highlanders in front perceiving the danger of their leader, one of them turned, and taking deliberate aim, discharged his piece. The shot took effect in the breast of the Cavalier's horse, which instantly lost its footing and floundered in the moss. At the same moment, however, as his steed sank to the girths, the Cavalier himself sprang from the saddle, and seizing the fair burden from the arms of his discomfited antagonist, quickly retraced his steps to solid ground. In a few seconds the poor horse, struggling and screaming, sank out of sight in the moss, and the overthrown Highlander would quickly have shared its fate had he not known how to avail himself of the hussocks of rushes and

coarse grass within reach. As it was, he recovered his footing with difficulty; and only pausing to cast behind him a glance of wrath not unmingled with apprehension, betook himself with what speed he might to rejoin his comrades, who were soon in full retreat with him towards the hills.

The whole transaction had not occupied more than a minute from first to last, and it was a curious feeling of agitation with which, now that the impulse of the exploit was over, the rescuer found himself supporting in his arms the form of his fainting prize. Before his flush of consciousness had time, however, to pale into a look of alarm at the state of his charge, he was accosted by a withered dame, apparently the young lady's attendant, who now managed to pick herself up from the green bracken at hand.

With a blessing in Gaelic, strangely qualified by a fresh look of distrust and alarm at the person who had proved so effective a friend at need, she took the maid from him, and placing her upon a mossy bank, proceeded to make use of the simple restoratives of the spot. At the same time, Guthrie, coming close up to his leader, broke in with the suggestion—

“We had as weel be passing on, gin it please you. Doubtless the young lady will be safe enough wi' these gallant riders *now*”—this in a

somewhat contemptuous accent loud enough for the gallant riders to hear; "the road is far yet to Stirling, and the morning wears."

The dame looked up from her office more brightly at the suggestion.

"Yes, indeed," she exclaimed, energetically, "the road hence will be safe enough for us, as the young man has said, though it might not be long safe for one so polite as himself. We will not be keeping you from your journey; and for the service that has been done my mistress it should be enough to know that it has been done the daughter of—of one who can richly repay it."

Here the good woman's eager oratory received a sudden check. The young maid, the object of her solicitous precautions, having given some premonitory symptoms of returning consciousness, had apparently caught the drift of the last words said, and, with suddenly returning color, now raised herself from the bank of turf on which she had been laid.

"My father, nurse Maisie," she said, "will not attempt to repay the service that has been done his daughter. For that," and she turned to her deliverer with a blush, "I can only offer you my own and my father's gratitude. But," she added quickly, "you are in haste to reach Stirling, and

we have already delayed you, I fear, too long ; if you will make use so far of the horse of my poor fallen trooper, I will see that a worthier steed is sent to replace your own immediately upon our arrival."

"The road is dangerous yet," answered the Cavalier boldly, oblivious of the significant looks of his henchman, "and the number of your troop diminished by one. You will not ask me, I hope, to leave my enterprise half-finished ; and as for thanks, if any were needed I should be well repaid by your permitting me to join your company to Stirling."

As this proposition, in the circumstances, could not without discourtesy be rejected, and moreover as the young lady herself, though apparently somewhat embarrassed, did not seem to be altogether displeased with it, the party, leaving two of the troopers to perform the last offices for their fallen comrade, were soon remounted and pursuing their journey eastward.

They had not proceeded far when Guthrie, disapproving apparently of the company in which he found himself, and riding in the rear of the party, heard the clatter of horsehoofs behind, and looking back perceived the person of his fellow-guest of the morning at Killearn Inn—Mr. Aaron Crookshanks, mounted on a sorry, shambling nag,

making eager, if somewhat ludicrous, endeavor to come up with him.

"Hold hard!" exclaimed the stout yeoman as the jolting missionary galloped up. "There's work waiting your cloth in the wood ye've passed. Didna ye see a stout caitiff asking your reverend service there ere they buried him? It's but a furlong's ride back to your office."

"What!" gasped the new arrival between fear and breathlessness, as he reined in his steed, "what a bloodthirsty country is this, that a peaceful son of the Covenant should be brought to sojourn in it! A threat of flaying alive after breakfast, and a man to be buried before noon! You mistake the office of the Kirk, young man. Her mission, differing from the idolatry of a false Babylon, lies not with the dead but with the living. Moreover, I am in haste particularly to be hence."

"So it wad seem," answered Guthrie with a grim humor. "The air o' the Lennox appears to suit your complexion but indifferently."

"The air of the country savors in my nostrils as of blood," replied the other. "And indeed I would that, before leaving the entertainment of that worthy sister in the faith, Mrs. Murdoch in the Netherbow, to spy out the iniquity of this land of Moab, I had fully bethought me of the

manifold dangers to be encountered in the country of the Malignant, James Graham."

"In this country," returned Guthrie, hotly, "that noble martyr is called the Marquis of Montrose, and ye'll take my counsel, Mr. Missioner, or whatever your precious spy-work behoves ye to be called, and bate ugly titles to the name o' Graham till ye're safe again among your sisters i' the faith. I've seen a better carcase than yours left to the daws ere this for a less word than ye've just said o' the Great Marquis—in his ain country."

"Heaven defend me!" cried Crookshanks in alarm. "It was but an idle word that I spoke, I would have you assured, and without harmful meaning. And, indeed, wherefore should I lift up my voice in testifying against him who has already suffered for his apostasy?"

"What?" thundered Guthrie in a voice which nearly made the tactless missioner jump out of his saddle—which at any rate made him whiten to the lips as he hastened to explain—

"Nay, I but spake unadvisedly with my mouth, and I crave your pardon for the word."

It was only after a pause that he added nervously, keeping his eye on the hand which Guthrie had shown himself quick to sweep to his sword-hilt—

“It is impressed upon me that I have not yet offered thanks to the youth who delivered me lately from the hands of the man of Belial. I will even now ride forward and acquaint him with my gratitude.”

“See you not,” growled Guthrie, glancing forward to the head of the little cavalcade, and apparently deriving small pleasure from the prospect—“see you not that the youth, as you make free to call him, is at this moment employed a deal better to his taste? Yet ride forward gin ye will; it may weel be that your brave and saintly discourse wad profit him better nor the sweet poison his father’s son is at this moment lippening to listen to.”

The object of these animadversions had now for some time been riding at the head of the party, in company with the heroine of the morning’s adventure. To judge as near as may be, the latter might be between seventeen and eighteen years of age. Neither while she lay fainting on the bank, nor now as she swayed lightly on her steed, could exception have been taken to the grace and symmetry of her form. Added to these, her softness of complexion and refinement of feature, bespeaking great delicacy of nurture, and, above all, a singular sweet sincerity of expression, revealing the character within, fitted her

peculiarly for the dramatic part she was destined to play in the inner history of Scotland at that time. Her manner possessed at once a graciousness and a simplicity which might be derived respectively from her high birth, and her youth, while the slight conversation upon which she ventured with her recent rescuer, bore about it a certain touch of inexperience which at the same time completed its charm, and in an ambitious and scheming age suggested possible danger to its possessor.

All these details and others, though hardly in such ordered form, her companion had had time to note as he rode by her side ; and it did not escape the observation of the jealous duenna who kept close behind, that the young Cavalier appeared more interested than prudence might have warranted in the company of her charge. The circumstance of the morning alone prevented her direct interference, and she was fain to content herself with the precaution of keeping within earshot, as near to her young mistress as possible. But it was with a distinct feeling of relief that at last she beheld the precipitous mass of the castle and rock of Stirling begin to rise in front.

The sight of their approaching destination appeared to strike the senses of the Cavalier and his companion at the same time. For a brief space

the talk which had been passing between them dropped, as if both had been impressed with the momentous nature of the circumstances with which they were about to find themselves surrounded. Nor is it to be marvelled at if that feeling was mingled half consciously with something of regret at the near termination of their journey.

It was the Cavalier who at last broke silence. "Yonder walls," he said, "by this time hold the destinies of Scotland."

"I have been told," returned the maid, "that Prince Charles is to meet the lords of the Parliament in Stirling. They say he is a gallant Prince. It may be that his coming will make the spilling of blood to cease."

"Would then that his coming had been a month ago!" ejaculated the young man with sudden emotion. "So might have been saved some of the bravest hearts about the throne."

"You mean the Marquis of Montrose and his friends?" answered his companion. Then after a pause, in which she noticed strangely the young Cavalier's emotion, she added slowly in a low voice, "That was a great man truly, though they say he shed much blood in his lifetime. He spared my foster-brother once in the midst of a battle."

As he listened, there passed over the features of the young man a glow of deep fervor and the light of a strong and sudden passion.

“Lady,” he exclaimed in a voice which trembled with feeling, “you have spoken a gentle word of Montrose. For that word my last service is yours for life or death, and with that service is all my heart.”

At these hot words the eyes of the two met for a moment. A lovely flush overspread the maiden’s face, from the fair throat to the smooth fair brow, and there were tears visible on her lashes as she slowly dropped her gaze; but she made no reply.

Just then the cavalcade reached the gates of Stirling. Slowly they rode up the main street, an officer of the escort, which now closed about their young mistress, leading the way. Up the causeway they passed to its head, and there, in Castle Wynd, paused at last before the gateway of a mansion of the first consequence, which is still standing to be seen.*

* This mansion, one of the most beautiful and interesting specimens of Scottish baronial architecture, was built in the early part of the seventeenth century by Sir William Alexander of Menstrie, created Earl of Stirling by James VI.—one of the most elegant poets of the period, and a friend of Ben Jonson and Drummond of Hawthornden. It was afterwards purchased by Argyle.

With no willingness had the progress of the party been followed so far by Guthrie, in sight of the townspeople and strangers of all sorts who then crowded the place ; and when the company stopped at last where it did, he muttered, with lowering brows : “ Just as I foreboded. The very lodging o’ Argyle ! ”

At the sight of their place of stoppage the face of the young Cavalier himself had first flushed a dark crimson and next as suddenly paled to the whiteness of ivory. It was then that, having sprung from his steed and assisted his fair companion to dismount, he made bold at last to ascertain her name.

“ Ye have had the privilege, young sir,” broke in the nurse with dignity, eager to assert the rightful pride of her master’s house — “ ye have had the privilege to do some slight service at her need to the Lady Anne Campbell, daughter of Archibald, Marquis of Argyle.”

“ Peace, nurse ! ” said the young girl. Then, turning to her protector, she asked : “ To whom am I to tell my father that we owe so deep and lasting a debt of gratitude ? ”

The features of the young Cavalier were pale as marble, and his lip quivered as he was about to essay a reply, when Guthrie, pushing to the

front, with less delicacy than vindictive assertion, furnished the information desired.

“Ye have this day, lady, profited at the hands of him who should now be called the Marquis of Montrose.”

CHAPTER V.

“The king sat in Dumfermline toun,
Drinking the bluid-red wine;
‘O where will I get a skeely skipper
To sail this ship o’ mine?’”

“*Sir Patrick Spens.*”

IN order to understand the situation at the Court of Charles II. in Stirling, it is necessary to recall one or two preceding events of the history of that time.

During the confinement of Charles I. in Carisbrooke Castle, that unfortunate monarch executed a private treaty with the Scottish Commissioners, by which he undertook, in return for the support of the northern kingdom, to establish Presbytery and confirm the Articles of the Solemn League and Covenant. This treaty, on being presented to the Scottish Parliament, occasioned a sudden and fierce division there. The more moderate party, called, on account of their acceptance of the treaty, the Engagers, declared themselves satisfied with the concessions of the King, and prepared to support his cause. This party was headed by the

Duke of Hamilton and his brother, the Earl of Lanark. The stricter Presbyterians, however, who composed the majority, declaimed loudly against any further effort being made in the cause of the distressed monarch, asserting, with much scriptural quotation, that the concessions of Charles were not enough to warrant the uplifting of the sword. At the head of this majority was the timid, but pious and crafty, Marquis of Argyle.

The Engagers, making an effort, raised a nondescript army of some fifteen thousand men, which under the command of Hamilton, marched into the north of England. This nobleman, however, proved himself a most incompetent general, and after loitering away more than forty days uselessly in Lancashire, was met by Cromwell near Warrington, where, without an effort at resistance, he allowed his troops to be dispersed, and himself presently surrendered to the enemy.

By this catastrophe the party of Argyle was left in uncontrolled majority at the head of affairs in Scotland. Already, upon the disbanding of Montrose's army, the Presbyterian leader had all but exterminated some of the clans, such as the Macdougals and Lamonts, who had been supporters of that general. He now called his followers to arms, and made himself master of the Highlands.

At the same time the west-country divines, declaring triumphantly how they had prophesied the downfall of the Engagers, and drawing many pertinent lessons from the dallying of Samson with Delilah, proceeded to Edinburgh at the head of the peasantry, in what was called the Whigamore's Raid, and added their weight to Argyle's assumption of power.

The reader is already aware of the abortive later effort of Montrose. The chief of the Grahams was of all men he whom Argyle had reason to fear. Three times had they met in battle, and upon each occasion had MacCallum More fled shamefully before the face of his enemy. When that enemy accordingly fell at last into his hands, it was not to be expected that much mercy should be shown him. With Montrose perished the last opposition to Argyle in Scotland.

This was the position of affairs when Charles II., having concluded the Treaty of Breda with Commissioners of the Scottish Parliament, sailed from Holland, and landing near the mouth of the Spey, proceeded to Stirling. Here he was now lodged, with sufficient state, if without much actual power, under the eye of the great Presbyterian marquis.

When, in the circumstances indicated at the

close of our last chapter, the young Cavalier, whom we may now call by his rightful title of Montrose, had taken leave of his fair companion of the morning, and had rested and refreshed himself somewhat at a convenient hostelry, he proceeded on foot, attended by Guthrie, to the lodging of the Prince. It was partly, no doubt, in consequence of the fatigue which he had recently undergone, and the loss of the previous night's rest, that his face, as he was ushered now into the royal presence, exhibited a particularly worn and haggard look; but there was also an excitement mingled with the dejection of his air, apparent in a hectic flush of cheek and brow, which did not escape the notice of Charles.

The latter was alone at the moment. On a large table in the apartment lay several rolls of official papers, and the materials of writing; but in these the King appeared to be taking little interest. Holding back the heavy curtain, he was watching from the window with an amused smile the evolution of relieving guard just then being methodically performed by the grim-featured Parliament soldiers below.

He turned quickly as his visitor was announced, and as he dropped the curtain and window from the high window-seat, the general appearance of his person could be made out.

A young man of not more than twenty years of age, slightly over middle height, he was dressed in a suit of black velvet, being still in mourning for his royal father. The only details with which this sombre garb was lightened were the white lace ruffles falling from collar and wrists, and the gold buckles which shone on his satin shoes. To his face but little exception might have been taken. His features were regular and sufficiently comely, and his eyes expressed liveliness and feeling. Perhaps, however, a student of character might have remarked some lack of resolution in the shape of the chin, and a certain love of ease and pleasure in the curve of the mouth.

"My Lord of Montrose," he hastened to say with a gracious smile, as the young nobleman entered, "I am glad to see you here. When the door opened I feared the return of some solemn fathers of the Assembly who have been favoring me with their company and most learned discourse for the last hour."

"Your Majesty," returned the new-comer gravely, with a deep reverence, "I am happy to greet you at last in your rightful seat, the ancient capital of your royal House."

"To tell the truth," replied Charles, with a peculiar smile, "between the weighty exhorta-

tions of my Presbyterian divines and the fatherly counsels of my precious Lord of Argyle, I had half begun to wish myself well out of this ancient capital of mine. I had begun indeed to think with some regret of merry Paris and the pleasant gardens of the Hague. But now that our good Montrose has come we will make other matters to think of. There are bright eyes and laughing lips in Scotland yet, I dare warrant, and it need be no hard task to add something to the fame of the Goodman of Ballengeich." *

"Your Majesty will not, however, I trust," answered Montrose, "be without a more serious field for my poor services."

"By no means," said the King, more gravely; "there is like to be work enough for peer and gentleman before Charles Stuart sits firm on the throne of Scotland. But—it was no more than an idle fancy—it seemed to me this moment that our trusty cousin of Montrose might already be conscious of a subtler allegiance. There is a look which a man wears when he has either wine or woman in his head."

At the suddenness of this sally, and perhaps also at its shrewdness, the young nobleman

* James V., it will be remembered, was under the incognito of "The Gudeman o' Ballengeich," the hero of many romantic adventures in the neighborhood of Stirling.

flushed a little. At the same time he could not refrain from a smile.

"Of wine," he said, "I have tasted not a sip since last night, when I lay in the town dungeon of Glasgow; and with the fairer part of your Majesty's subjects, I have had no dealings—that is, excepting——"

"Even so," returned the King, laughing at the obvious confusion of his guest. "It is as I thought: the exception in this case is fatal." Then suddenly assuming seriousness, he changed the topic. "It was to ascertain the temper of the country that you took upon you the trouble of this journey," he said, and there was a scarcely perceptible shade of anxiety on his face as he spoke. "What say our gallant Grahams* and the gentlemen of the west?"

"In the west country, I fear," answered Montrose, "the party of the Kirk hold everything in their own hands. The few loyal gentlemen whose means remain to them after the expenses of the late levies and the fines of the Parliament, dare stir not an inch, for the most part, from fear of the common people, who hold the power, and who are ruled entirely by their ministers. I have here,

* "Gallant Grahams" was the alliterative sobriquet for Montrose's clan, as "gentle Johnstons" was that of a well-known race on the Borders.

however, the assurances of some persons of consequence who are still able and willing to proffer further service to your Majesty. That they say they will do, to their last bonnet-piece and the last drop of their blood. But the letters will set forth their abilities and loyalty to better effect than my poor words."

And Montrose took from the pocket of an inner vest a packet of letters—the possible discovery of which by the warders of Glasgow prison had been the chief risk and anxiety of his arrest of the previous day but which, trusting partly to the ambiguity of their contents, and partly to his own chances of escape with them intact, he had hesitated to the last moment to destroy. These he handed to Charles.

"It distresses me beyond words," said the King, as he took the packet, "to hear of the condition to which so many brave houses have been reduced by adherence to the royal cause. It is a game, however, which must be played out, and I trust yet to recompense for their sufferings the worst-used of my loyal Cavaliers. Of these there is one at hand," and Charles looked significantly at the young nobleman before him, "who has not been the least to suffer, and who must be first to taste the return of the royal fortunes."

"My liege," returned Montrose, coloring slightly, "believe me, the house of Graham has ever served the throne from loyalty of affection, and has deemed itself sufficiently rewarded by the trust and honorable regard of the King."

Upon these words Charles looked steadily for a moment at the speaker. Perhaps there flashed across his mind a misgiving that the house of Stuart had not always held the best of faith with the lords of Montrose. Perhaps there was in his thought the fact that but a month earlier he had sent the greatest of the Grahams to make war upon the Parliament in the north and to find a shameful death in his cause, while he himself had been secretly engaged in treating with that Parliament, and was even now keeping discreet silence regarding the judicial murder it had committed. But there was no shadow of such a thought in the eyes of the young nobleman before him; and as he recognized the loyalty that remained true to the King, in face even of the doubtful faith of that King himself, there flashed across the features of Charles such a look of sincere affection as never before perhaps had found expression there, and perhaps never would find expression there again.

"Montrose," he said, apparently deeply moved, as he took the young marquis's arm and drew him

to the window-seat beside him, "it is one of the bitter ingredients in the cup of him who wears a crown that he knows not, among all those who surround and flatter him, whether, apart from their own interest, he possesses a single friend. At this moment, however, I am assured that there is one at least in whom I may entirely trust—that there is true affection for his Prince, as well as entire loyalty to the Crown, in the heart of the Graham."

"My liege——" Montrose was proceeding to reply, when he was interrupted by the King.

"It is even so," said the latter, "I am assured. And indeed,"—here he rose from his seat and took some steps across the floor, though he was careful to keep the pitch of his voice low enough to reach only the ear for which the words were intended—"indeed, it appears to me that the son of the royal martyr betrayed at Newcastle, and the son of the loyal nobleman done basely to death in Edinburgh, have common cause against one ambitious foe. Yet it seems there are difficulties in the way. In the east country, I have been informed, my lords of Parliament and the ministers of Assembly are but tools of one crafty traitor; and to the west, you tell me, it were vain to look for a weapon."

"So please your Majesty," said the young

nobleman, with sudden enthusiasm, "there is still one resource. Bid me unfurl once more the banners of the King and of Montrose, and let it be known that Charles himself fights under the royal standard. In a day every Graham will be under arms, and in a week there will be such a loyal army in the Highlands as will sweep Parliament and Assembly, and the traitorous ambitions behind them both, altogether into the Tweed.'

Upon the proposal, made with such energy and enthusiasm, that he should himself take up arms and trust to the gallant clansmen of the north to free the Crown from the present compulsion and indignity which were being put upon it, the fire of enterprise sparkled for a moment in the eye of Charles. He hesitated, and appeared almost to entertain the thought; but in the pause he had time to recollect the personal effort and perhaps hardship which such an undertaking would imply, and it was with a measured voice that he answered.

"It is a suggestion worthy the son of the Great Montrose," he said. "Meanwhile there lie less desperate remedies nearer to our hand. It may well be that the spinners of treasonous nets are to be caught in their own weaving. The attempt may at least be made. Should it fail, there will

still be the claymores of our willing Grahams to trust to ; and to Montrose himself, be assured, his King will then look for his last defence against the ambition of Argyle."

Throughout the interview, it may be understood, the feelings of the young Cavalier had been of a curiously mixed description. It would be idle to deny that the experience of the morning, the character and person of the young girl into whose company he had been thrown in sufficiently romantic circumstances, had affected him powerfully. There had been about the affair and its heroine exactly that air of gallantry and mystery likely to excite a tender interest in the breast of one of the sterner sex ; the young nobleman's sympathies had been touched at their most vulnerable point by a chance remark of his fair companion ; and the final discovery of her parentage had been an incident suddenly investing the relation of the two with the subtle element of tragedy. Moved at the same time by a loyalty which through long education had become an instinct, and possessing the best of all reasons in the death of his father for hating the name of Argyle, he was drawn strongly to agree with the King in his denunciation of that statesman's designs. Profound and conflicting motives like these, it may easily be believed, rendered their possessor pecu-

liarily sensitive to the words of Charles, and perhaps it was well that the latter, having assured himself of the loyalty and support of the representative of the powerful name of Montrose, now saw fit to assume a lighter tone.

“It was a slighter cause, I trust,” he said, “which occasioned your visit last night to the town prison of Glasgow; a succor to some follower in need, perhaps?”

Montrose smiled. “It was by no free will of mine,” he said, “that I made acquaintance with the dungeon of the Bishop’s Castle. The worthy burgesses of Glasgow only break the Sabbath when there is a Cavalier to arrest. After a slight disturbance, not at all of my seeking, at the kirk door, they would have me wait the pleasure of some worshipful bailie who was not to be disturbed at his meditations, and I was fairly in the way of spending the night in no very comfortable quarters, when a stout henchman found me out, and whistled a good fairy upon the scene in the person of the keeper’s daughter, who by and by set me on the open causeway.”

“For which fair service,” laughed the King, “the released prisoner doubtless made ample amends. But surely this was never the fair one on whose account Montrose was forced to make embarrassed exception but lately?”

At this question, put point blank, though in a vein of raillery, the young Cavalier became suddenly grave again, and reddened somewhat.

“It is right your Majesty should know,” he said, “that this morning I had the fortune to rescue from marauders in the Lennox, and to escort afterwards to safety in Stirling, no less a person than the daughter of the Marquis of Argyle.”

“Ha!” exclaimed Charles, looking up quickly with displeasure and surprise. “The daughter of Argyle in Stirling!” Then, in a lower voice, as if to himself, he added, “this bodes some new scheme, no doubt, of the arch-plotter. Let him beware when he fences with such delicate weapons that the foil pierces not his own skin.” Turning again to the young nobleman, he said gravely, “I thank you, my Lord of Montrose, for the timely knowledge. And now,” he added, “I will detain you no longer from the refreshment which you doubtless need. Meanwhile be sure the interests of his friends are not less near than his own to the heart of Charles Stuart.”

Upon this assurance and permission, Montrose, not perhaps without relief that the interview was over, bowed and retired.

Not many moments after his departure, when

the young King, with a look of anxiety mingled with menace on his brow, had thrown himself into the gilt leathern chair by his writing-table, the door again opened, and the gentleman-usher announced the Marquis of Argyle.

CHAPTER VI.

“ My mither’s aye glow’rin’ ower me.”

Scots Song.

As Charles looked up from the abstracted mood into which he had been thrown by the communication of his late visitor, he was approached by a person of somewhat remarkable appearance.

The Marquis of Argyle was then about fifty-two years of age, though it might have been difficult to make anything like an approximate guess from the keen and shifting expression of his features. Clad, out of deference to the situation of the Court, in black, when he threw back the cloak which hung from his shoulder there was revealed a spare, wiry figure of medium height, moving habitually with an air of diplomatic caution. The long, shaven face, with its puckered muscles and ample brow, might indicate at once capacity and shrewdness, while the compressed, unctuous mouth and straight chin declared a silent tenacity of purpose; but an air of entire uncertainty and craft was conveyed by the sharp,

squint eyes, a peculiarity of feature which has made its owner remembered to the present day as the "glided marquis." Such was the outward appearance of the singular dexterous, energetic, and secret, and at the same time physically timid nobleman, who, at the period of which we write, with greater power than had ever been possessed by the Albanys or Douglasses of earlier times, held the affairs of Scotland silently in his grasp. This was the nobleman who, when Lord Lorne, and threatened with disinheritance by his father, had induced Charles I. to enforce an old Act against Papists, and compel that father to assign at once to his son all the estates and honors of Argyle. At the last meeting of father and son in the royal presence the old earl is said to have addressed the monarch: "Sire, I know this young man better than you can do. You have brought me low that you may raise him. I doubt you will live to repent. He is a man of craft, subtlety, and falsehood, and can love no man; and if ever he finds it in his power to do you mischief, he will be sure to do it."* There had not been wanting those who saw in the betrayal of Charles I. by Argyle's Presbyterian troops at Newcastle a fulfilment of this bitter prophecy.

* The incident is related in Dodd's "Struggle of the Scottish Covenanters."

It was with a curious mixture of fatherly patronizing and courtier-like submission that the Presbyterian leader now made his way towards the table at which the young King was seated.

The latter rose graciously to receive him, and it was without a trace of his recent abstraction visible that he motioned him to a chair at hand.

"My Lord Marquis," he said, "it was but this morning we had the advantage of your attendance and counsel on matters of State. I trust it is no new complication of affairs which occasions the renewal of our interview."

"I was glad to perceive as I came in," answered Argyle, "that your Majesty was busied with the papers prepared by Advocate Warristoun. It was of these that, with a zeal of earnest service to the throne, I returned to inquire."

"To speak the truth, my lord," returned the King, somewhat briefly, "I have but lightly glanced at the documents. It would appear that Parliament and Assembly together desire more than an ample expression of our goodwill."

As he spoke the King cast a look, which in reality was his first, at the rolls of parchment beside him. While he did so his visitor watched him narrowly. At the same time the latter hastened to forestall, so far as himself was concerned, any adverse expression of royal feeling.

"The declarations as first drafted," he said, "were still more express in statement ; but I will confess that out of consideration for a Prince, whom indeed I have not been the least mover in bringing to this kingdom, I used what small influence I possess to have them modified."

"Then, my lord," said Charles with ominous steadiness, keeping a place on the parchment with his finger as he looked up, "I am to understand that all here contained has the sanction of Argyle?"

"Nay," answered the wary courtier, quick to perceive danger imminent, and provide accordingly, "not so. I would have your Majesty to understand me as being but the messenger by whom the expression of your Majesty's subjects was conveyed, and no whit compromised therein."

"It is well," returned the King with some dilation of the nostril and a slight curl of the lip. "Ill would it become the noble who owed so much to our royal father to offer words like these for our signature. You are aware of those words, my lord?"

Argyle rose and, following the finger of Charles on the parchment, read a sentence with which he was already perfectly familiar: "That these persons herein named, known as chief instruments of

the late King in his malignant and sinful opposition to the people of God, do forthwith remove from the royal presence upon pain of escheat and impeachment as contemners of the Estates in convention assembled." The document included the names of more than twenty distinguished royalists, the most immediate adherents of the Court. Among the names of such men as Buckingham, Hamilton, and Lauderdale, appeared that of the "son of James Graham, lately Marquis of Montrose."

"Already," said Charles, as Argyle resumed his seat, "we have yielded to admit to the royal household the chaplains appointed by the Commission of Assembly. It is not an hour since they intruded their unasked ministrations upon us here. To that, if needs be, we can submit, but never shall we stoop to sign a decree of an import so disloyal as this, let the Estates resolve as they please."

Argyle bit his lip. This was a measure upon which he had largely depended to alienate from the royal cause such councillors as he most feared. By creating a breach between the young King and his chief friends he had hoped to bring the monarch still further under his own power. He was aware that the Stuart dynasty still had sufficient hold upon the popular affection of the

country to make it an impossible policy openly to coerce the throne. Part, therefore, of the policy of the party of which Argyle was the head lay in alienating this popular affection by proofs of the King's perfidy, so bringing him more and more to depend upon themselves and to be the mere tool of their ambitions. The hope of the party for the present lay in representing to Charles, what was little more than fact, that the entire conviction of the country was bound up with the Presbyterian principle as set forth in the Articles of the Solemn League and Covenant, and that the only hope of his secure settlement on the throne depended upon his supporting that principle. It was with this object in view that the marquis now proceeded to renew the colloquy.

"I do not doubt that your Majesty has examined the contents of the second writing lying at your hand. The royal assent was most anxiously desired to these, the Commission of Assembly and the Committee of Estates laying it upon me solemnly to urge that the security of the throne itself, which God defend! and the peace of your Majesty's kingdom, altogether depend upon this signing."

"If it be no less disgraceful to the royal name and the royal honor than the first," said Charles,

laying his hand upon the parchment, while he glanced sternly at Argyle, "it is needless to unroll it here."

The latter hastened to reply—

"It but conveys the royal assent to the National Covenant of 1638 and to the Solemn League and Covenant of 1644, and expresses the King's willingness to accept the advice of the Estates in all civil affairs, and the ruling of the Assembly in ecclesiastical matters, while——"

"In other words, my lord," interrupted the King, "I am asked to sign away the hereditary rights of the throne of Scotland, to assume the name of King without a vestige of the power which alone makes the kingly title respected."

"I would crave to remind your Majesty," returned Argyle, "that no more is now submitted to your hand than was submitted by the commissioners at Breda, whereto, we were made to believe, the royal signature was willingly appended."

"At Breda," replied Charles, somewhat haughtily, "our signature was added to no such explicit statements as these, and you forget, my Lord of Argyle, that whatever might have been the terms of the letters in which we were then pleased to make known our mind, they have been openly

disavowed and declared non-binding by the Convention of Estates itself."

The face of the young King during this interview had exhibited a changing variety of expression—from the keen glance with which he had looked up when his visitor was first announced, to the flush with which he rebutted that visitor's last veiled insinuation. The face of Argyle, on the contrary, remained inscrutable as ever. Long accustomed to be his own sole councillor, and to attain his ends even amid the most adverse circumstances by a diplomacy which was only possible to one of entire coolness and self-possession, he was not to be drawn into a betrayal of feeling even under the strongest provocation. It could not but be galling to such a temper as his to find his most cherished schemes, on the very point of attainment, threatened with destruction by the resolution of the royal youth whom he had expected to find the most pliant instrument for his purpose. No one, however, could have gathered so much from the expression of his features as he returned to his point. In this respect the practised party leader is like the skilful gambler who plays card after card without betraying by the movement of so much as a muscle how near he may be to the verge of bankruptcy.

"Your Majesty should be made aware," Argyle

resumed, with hardly a pause, "that the desire of the Estates of Parliament, unanimously expressed that such a declaration should receive the royal signature, was not without good and loyal reason. It is well known that the levies of the English sectaries are already being directed toward the Scottish border, and that General Fairfax has been ordered to assume command with a view to prevent your Majesty's peaceful settlement on the throne of Scotland. At such a juncture it will be obvious that every effort must be put forth to smite the followers of false prophets and maintain the sacred right of the anointed House."

"It is not for the first time," said Charles, "that a Stuart king has had to fight for his kingdom, and be sure that, when the need comes, the present bearer of the name shall not fail in the example of his fathers."

"But a king," returned Argyle, "albeit the most valiant, may not descend single-handed against the hosts of the Edomites; and it is greatly feared that, without King Charles's express declaration that their rights as set forth in the National Covenant and in the Solemn League and Covenant shall be confirmed, the majority of the Scottish nation will refrain from girding on their arms in the royal cause."

"In plain words once more, my Lord Marquis,

we are to understand that the Presbyterians of Scotland, of whom the Marquis of Argyle is known to be the leader, may refuse to take up arms in the cause of King Charles, except upon certain conditions. My lord, we would remind you that such action, even the threatening of it, is known by the name of treason."

"My liege," exclaimed Argyle, with a haste which was for once hardly compatible with entire self-possession, "I spoke but as a councillor of the crown, and in nowise declaring my own intentions, which in all things are loyal to your Majesty?"

The young King gravely refrained from a smile. He perceived that the marquis had been startled out of his habitual self-control by a touch upon his weak point—bodily fear. But he went on—

"Of your loyalty, my lord, I am sufficiently assured; I will trust your lordship therefore to understand me when I say that it can form no part of my policy to purchase the support of any political party by placing the lives and estates of my friends under that party's power."

Here a cloud passed across the face of Charles himself. He was thinking of the fate of Montrose. Without a pause, however, he proceeded:

"I am aware that a certain faction in the

Estates of Parliament, as well as in the General Assembly, are disposed treasonably to refuse support to the throne excepting upon such terms as appear in these declarations ; but I am also informed that that faction is largely in the hands of the Marquis of Argyle, to whose declared loyalty I think we may trust to bring his friends to a better understanding. These gentlemen of the Presbyterian following may not have considered one point—that their form of worship and government is likely to fare much more stiffly at the hands of the English sectaries than at the hands of a king who will owe them favor for their loyal support. My lord, we commit the instruction of the Presbyterian party in this particular to yourself, not doubting the result. In case of their being convinced of their true duty and advantage by your able reasoning, I would remind you that the royal house has not been wont to stint its favors to those whom it recognizes as its friends. The service may present some difficulty but it will be of certain value to the Crown and to the kingdom, and it will not be beyond the royal reward. When Charles Stuart sits securely upon the throne of this country it lies with you, my Lord Marquis, to decide whether there shall be a Dukedom of Argyle.”

At the conclusion of this speech it was appar-

ent that the King had judged accurately of the jointing of his opponent's harness. Notwithstanding that, under the keen gaze of his Prince, Argyle made every effort to retain an appearance of composure, it was evident enough that he was strongly moved. His pale complexion grew perceptibly paler, his eyes glistened like a miser's when he touches gold, and it was a moment before he found words to reply. At the very point at which the mature plans of his ambition seemed baffled by the failure to coerce the King into becoming a mere tool of the Presbyterian party, he was astounded at the new and more brilliant vista opened out before him by the hand of that King himself. Recovering himself instantly, however, though with an effort, he hastened to assure Charles of his entire loyalty and support. Afterwards he proceeded by degrees to discuss with the King the measures which might be used to conciliate the various sections of the Scottish Presbyterians, as well as the methods which should be taken to confuse the councils and disarm the efforts of the Independent party in England who menaced the peaceful settlement of the Crown in the north.

The hour was late when the marquis at last left the royal apartments, and as, attended by his esquires and henchmen, he made his way by

torchlight to his stately mansion in Castle Wynd, there were a hundred new threads of diplomacy, to meet the new circumstances of the case, already spinning in his brain. But above all these—so rapidly does ambition grow by what it feeds on—beyond even the glittering prize which had been held out to him by Charles, there arose a yet more dazzling vision, and, if his firmly compressed lips had been wont to mutter his thoughts, at that moment they would have declared his ambition to concern the Lady Anne.

CHAPTER VII.

“A king can mak’ a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a’ that ;
But an honest man’s abune his might.
Gude faith, he mauna fa’ that.”

Robert Burns.

LATE as the hour was when Argyle returned from his audience with the King, his household was still astir and waiting for him. Link-boys and hangers-on outside the doors, and the train of domestics and armed retainers whom his natural timidity induced him to keep about his person within, all sprang up alert and attentive upon the whisper of his appearance. For whatever the suavity and self-restraint of the marquis in public affairs, his immediate attendants had reason to know that in private his displeasure was apt to find expression in fiery and destructive outbursts, and that any derogation of respect or duty detected in a follower by those sharp cross eyes was certain to count, sooner or later, to the delinquent’s cost.

Upon the present occasion their master cast no

more than a hasty glance at the preparations which were made to receive him, and bidding his marshal of the household see to it that the entrances were made fast, and that the usual guard was set, he was about to retire to the small cabinet chamber in which he was accustomed to arrange affairs of business or State, when the gray-headed functionary reminded him that his chaplain, the Reverend Mr. John Nevoy,* was still waiting to conduct family worship.

"Bid Mr. Nevoy," answered the marquis, in a somewhat abstracted tone, "proceed with the ordinances as he sees fit at this late hour; but tell him I would be excused from profiting by his breaking of the Word at this time. I have still pressing matters to see to, and must entrust myself to-night with my own devotions."

With this, Argyle entered his cabinet, closed

* Dr. Guthrie in his "Memoirs" narrates how, when the fort of Dunavertie, in the West Highlands, held by the Macdonalds of M'Coll-Keitach, followers of Montrose, received quarter and surrendered to Argyle and David Leslie, this "bloody preacher, Mr. John Nevoy, prevailed with the general to break his word; and so the army was let loose upon them, and killed them all without mercy. Whereat David Leslie seemed to have some inward check; for while the Marquis and he, with Mr. Nevoy, were walking over the ankles in blood, he turned about and said, 'Now Master John, have you not at last gotten your fill of blood?'"

the door, and, spreading a number of papers on the table, proceeded to make from them a series of careful notes and several lists of names. He was not long suffered, however, to remain undisturbed in this occupation, and it was with a gesture of annoyance that, hearing a heavy foot-step approach, he hastily covered with a blank foolscap the paper upon which he was writing. As he glanced up, the door opened without ceremony, and there appeared a lean figure clad in black—a man of hard feature, with stiff, iron-gray hair, bristling eyebrows, piercing gray eyes, and with prejudice written in the drawn pursing of the mouth. This individual made no pretence of courtesy to the presence in which he found himself, and, without waiting to be invited, at once proclaimed his errand.

“Woe,” he exclaimed, in a peculiarly strident voice, “woe to them that forsake the assembling of themselves together! Their house shall be dashed in pieces like a potter’s sherd.”

“You had my message, Mr. Nevoy,” said Argyle, prudently suppressing his displeasure. “Wherefore at this hour do you disturb my private communings?”

“Wherefore?” answered the intruder, rhetorically. “Wherefore was Elijah the Tishbite sent down to meet Ahab, King of Israel, in the vine-

yard of Naboth? Lo, are not the mighty fallen, when he who yesterday was the leader of the host of the chosen, is found already forsaking the ordinances of the tabernacle? This it is to hold communing with the Amorites, whom the Lord cast out before Israel. Verily, that communing is as the touching of pitch. Wherefore I am come to warn thee, Argyle, lest thy house be made like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha, the son of Ahijah."

Argyle perceived from these words that his part in bringing about the recent return of the King, and the closeness of his relations with Charles since that event, had already awakened his chaplain's suspicions. At the same time he was aware how important to his plans was the retention of the entire confidence of the Rev. Mr. Nevoy and his like. Accordingly he was the more willing to appease the jealous temper of the rigid churchman.

"Believe me, Mr. Nevoy," he said, "it was no idle humor to-night which induced me to forego the refreshment of your ministrations. These have been blessed to me too often hitherto to be lightly considered now. Pressing affairs—the safety of the Church, the security of the State—call for consideration."

"Yet would ye put your trust in the arm of

flesh ? ” returned the chaplain with zeal, though secretly somewhat mollified by the marquis’s style of address. “ Did not the walls of Jericho fall down neither by the carnal arm nor by the might of princes, but by the blast of the seven rams’ horns and the shout of the chosen people ! And shall not the same thing in these latter days befall the enemies of the elect, provided the elect forsake not the ark of the covenant, and join not themselves with the forces of the Amorites ? Wherefore I would inquire whether this young man, the Prince of this earth, who has been admitted by the elders into the camp, has yet partaken of the circumcision—has thrown in his lot with the covenanted people ; or whether he persists in clinging to the sins of his father and the idolatries of his mother’s house ? ”

Argyle at these words cast a keen, calculating glance at his interrogator ; but the chaplain unblenching, met the look with a gaze of bold and stern inquiry.

It was with material and opinions of Mr. Nevoy’s sort as weapons, that the Presbyterian battle against the Independents of the south was presently to be fought. The dominant party in Scotland was at that time ruled by its ministers, who insisted in taking upon themselves the functions of the Jewish prophets of old. Not con-

tent with instituting a minute inquisitorial system upon the most private life of the people,* they arrogated to themselves a right to dictate in the policies of the nation and in the conduct of armies in the field. As they continually wrested texts and used the authority of Scripture to support that dictation, it may be understood that the task of their statesmen and generals was by no means an easy one. A similar disposition on the part of the forces under Cromwell is said to have been met by him with the shrewd double order to "trust in God *and keep their powder dry*," and that general was powerful enough to overrule matters always by his own strong worldly sense and iron hand. But on the side of the Scottish Presbyterians the same overruling does not appear to have been possible, and perhaps it was never attempted. The comparative merits of the two systems appeared in the issue. Argyle him-

*The books of kirk-sessions still extant declare how the members were exhorted to discover and report the scandals in their several districts. The contemporary historian, Kirkton, may be quoted: "Every minister was to be tried five times a year, both for his personal and ministerial behavior; every congregation was to be visited by the presbytery, that they might see how the vine flourished and the pomegranate budded. And there was no case nor question in the meanest family in Scotland but it might become the object of the deliberation of the General Assembly."

self doubtless was sufficiently acquainted with the stiffness of the material with which he had to work to attain his end. But he had already been able to make that material serve his purpose in acquiring power. The scriptural incitations of Mr. John Nevoy himself, to "slay and spare not," had been useful enough when a feudal enemy was to be rooted out and destroyed. So perhaps the marquis thought the tool could still be made serviceable to his design. Lacking the physical courage and rugged force of character of the English Protector, he chose to rule by craft, and by this, for a time at least, he had marvellous success.

In the present case, recognizing the advisability of retaining his chaplain's confidence, and through it the confidence of the orators of the Church, he unbent so far as to inform Nevoy that though the King had not yet subscribed the Solemn League and Covenant, or agreed to dismiss his Malignant followers, these steps were under his Majesty's consideration, and that he, Argyle, was in great hopes to bring the Prince to a right mind in the matter. Meanwhile he trusted to have his hands upheld in the effort by the prevailing prayers of the Kirk's ministers in general and of the Reverend Mr. Nevoy in particular.

By this piece of information, to say nothing of

the sop with which it was administered, Argyle not only induced the vigilant chaplain to condone his non-attendance at worship, but he brought about a considerable shortening of the solemn function itself. Such information was too authentic and too important to be allowed to find its way to other ears by a less trustworthy channel, and Mr. Nevoy felt it to be his duty, so soon as the service was over, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, at once to communicate the facts which he had acquired to certain reverend brethren of his acquaintance.

It was owing to this zeal of his chaplain to assist affairs of State, and his consequent shortening of family worship, that before Argyle had been long resettled at his occupation, the door of his cabinet again opened to admit a visitor. This time it was his lady herself, who had come to express surprise at the late duration of her lord's visit to the King, and at his absence from family prayers.

"Madam," he exclaimed, repressing some exasperation when he saw her, "have you not yet gone to bed? It is an ill hour for me to be disturbed when I have this night's business to see to."

"An ill hour it maun be," answered the dame, with a dangerous light in her black eyes, as she

shut the door behind her and came forward, "when Argyle bides so late in the tent of Saul; and a waur hour when he hides his face from the breaking of the Word in his ain house. Weel may we look to see 'Ichabod' written on the wall of our dwelling when he that should be leader to the host is himself a faller-away from the ordinances."

"I tell you, wife," returned the much-admonished statesman, already beginning to perceive that the task before him—to reconcile the insistent members of his party to a non-covenanting king—was likely to prove no easy one—"I tell you I have great and pressing business to see to, business concerning both Church and State *Necessitas non lages habet*. On the subject of the ordinances I have already satisfied Mr. Nevoy."

"E'en so," returned the lady, with feminine inconsequence. "But it is of another matter that I came to speak. Let him that saith there is a mote in his neighbor's eye take heed that there be not a beam in his own eye."

"Yet am I not likely, it would appear," returned Argyle, "to be left long without knowledge of the beam, if such there be. It is difficult to answer a speaker who utters speech only in parables. Speak plainly and make an end of the matter, if you have aught to make plaint of, for I have still much to do."

“Such is aye your ower apt answer, my lord, busied as ye are, like Martha, with many things. But I would warn Argyle, while he is busied in setting in order the affairs of Kirk and State, that danger, even bodily danger, may lie in wait for those of his ain household.”

“Bodily danger?” exclaimed the marquis, laying down his pen with a trembling hand. “Why did you not say this at once? It may be that the assassin even now——”

“Tush, man!” returned his spouse, with a scarce concealed curl of the lip, “ye are aye afraid of the death ye will never dee. Speak of knife or bullet and your thoughts flee aye to your ain flesh. But there are others under the roof of this house besides the marquis himself. To speak shortly, our daughter Anne, travelling hither this day through the Lennox, was set upon by marauders; her escort, none of the largest for the daughter of so weel-hated a lord, was put to extremity; and Anne herself came nigher than was pleasant to being carried bodily into the hills.”

“Anne—the daughter of Argyle!—attacked in the Lennox!” cried the marquis, his eyes scintillating, and the color coming to his cheek with vindictive passion. “Have the Grahams learned nothing from the fate of their chief? Ill shall it go with them for this day’s work if I live twenty-

four hours longer. Fire and sword shall teach a stern lesson to the viper's brood of Montrose. This it was to tarry by the way when the sword was in my hand; this it was to draw back from the shedding of blood! But Agag shall straightway be hewed in pieces, and his house shall be wasted utterly!" And Argyle clutched the arms of his oaken chair with a grip as if he were ready to strangle his enemies with his own hands.

His lady waited until this outburst of feudal hatred was expended before replying, and it was in a tone of provoking self-possession that she then proceeded:

"If ye would lippen to hear the end of the affair it is likely ye might have a different word to say. The robbers were caterans from the hills—Macgregor's men, I would think, from what the troopers can tell. But Macgregors or Buchanans, they would have kept their purpose, and the Lady Anne might by this time have been far enough out of the gate, if it hadna been that the Graham himself—the son of Montrose—came on the scene just then, routed the marauders, and brought your bonnie daughter safe to her father's door."

"The son of James Graham!" exclaimed Argyle, with a frown on his brow, but a certain quivering about the lips. Then he added slowly:

“It would have pleased me nigh as well to hear that the caterans had carried off my daughter.”

“Is that so?” answered his lady. “I maun say that I am of another mind. The matter fell out by a wise direction. But the eyes of some are blinded that they may not see. In this hap I perceive a dispensation of Providence to win a leader out of the host of the enemies. To be plain in the matter, this young nobleman has shown a certain preference, I am told, for our daughter, and I would put it to you whether she may not be designed as an instrument in the Lord’s hand to snatch him as a brand from the burning.”

Argyle sprang to his feet at these words, and began to pace fiercely up and down the chamber.

“Never,” he cried—“never while I live speak to me of friendship or union between the Houses of Argyle and Montrose.”

“Yet,” persisted the marchioness in a lower voice, somewhat awed by the strong passion evident in her lord’s face, “it would not be the first time that the House of Campbell has gained lands and power by such a match, and I would remind your lordship that it might be weel to have a friend in the Court party if ever there should come a turn of the tide.”

“If that day should ever come,” returned

Argyle, speaking out of his usual prudence in the white heat of passion and ambition, "the friend at Court shall be Charles Stuart himself. Kings of Scotland before now," he went on more soberly, fixing his gaze sternly upon his wife, "have taken to their bed the daughters of Drummond and Douglas. Charles II. will stoop scarce as far when he espouses the daughter of Argyle."

At this speech, and the sudden glimpse it afforded of the profound reachings of her husband's ambition, the marchioness remained for a moment in silence. At last she spoke, looking steadily, not without some awe, upon the unsearchable face before her.

"What hope or guarantee have you," she asked, "of possessing such power as this implies over the mind of the Prince?"

For answer Argyle took from an inner pocket a parchment, sealed with the King's signet, and spread it before his wife. Her eyes glanced over it in a moment. It ran as follows:—

"ARGYLE,—Whereas I am assured of your entire loyalty and goodwill to the Crown, both now and formerly, in consideration of your many trusts and labors concerning the kingdom of Scotland, I hereby promise, upon being brought securely to the throne of these countries, to raise

you to the estate, rank, and honors of a duke of Scotland.

“CHARLES R.”

When she had read this letter for the second time more slowly, the marchioness rose from her seat.

“My man, my man,” she said, laying her hand gently upon her husband’s sleeve, “these are paper promises. There is like to be as little friendship to you, my lord, from the son of Charles I. as from the son of James Graham. This night, I fear, shall cost Argyle his head.”

CHAPTER VIII.

“And ye sall walk in silk attire,
And siller ha’e to spare,
Gin ye’ll consent to be his bride,
Nor think on Donald mair.”

Susanna Blamire.

PUSILLANIMOUS as he was apt to appear, and as, indeed, he invariably proved himself to be, in the actual presence of bodily danger, Argyle, nevertheless, was not of a character to be deterred from prosecuting any purpose of his ambition by the mere possibility of future risk. The quality is not an uncommon one, an ordinary instance of its possession being furnished by the criminal who, in pursuit of his nefarious designs, does not hesitate to take life, relying, as he does, upon the chances of evading justice, but who, when brought face to face with the last penalty of the law, weeps and trembles in the extremity of terror. In the same way the controller of the destinies of Scotland and of Charles II. for the hour, was no doubt fully aware of the risks he ran in playing so daring a game as he intended. To use the power

over the young King which fortune had for the moment given him, in order to extract a dukedom, and at the same time to cajole the youthful monarch into a marriage with his daughter, was a design which by some sudden turning of the tables, such as was not infrequent in those days, might result in most disastrous consequences to himself. But the prospect of by one movement raising his family to the ducal rank, and effecting an alliance with the blood royal in the first degree, overtopped for the hour all more prudent considerations, and with all his undoubted faculties the marquis bent himself to the accomplishment of his design.

It was, therefore, no later than the morning following the interviews which have just been chronicled that Argyle sought an opportunity of preparing his daughter's mind for the entertainment of his project, hoping, not unnaturally, that the dazzling prospect he had to suggest would at once awaken a womanly ambition in Anne's breast, and bring the attraction of her beauty to further the design upon the King.

In other circumstances he might possibly have chosen to enlist his lady's help for the first delicate advances on the subject. But last evening's interview had revealed to him the fact that the marchioness had already, with the instinct of a

mother and a woman, divined some secret inclination of her daughter's mind, and had been disposed, impossible and mischievous as the project was, to sympathize with, and even to further it. For this reason he determined to move in the matter with his own hand.

The daughter of Argyle, after the fatigue and excitement of the previous day, and perhaps also for the more politic reason of preventing the development of any further entanglement which might arise from a chance meeting with her recent protector, had been recommended rest within doors by her mother. She was engaged accordingly with her needle upon the production of a piece of tapestry, destined when finished to cover one of the walls of the castle at Inverary. The occupation, to which a new vogue had been given, eighty years earlier, by the taste of Queen Mary, had not yet been rendered superfluous as a fashionable employment by the productions of the Flemish looms. The work, besides industry and artistic skill, required good eyesight, and on the plea that the room where she wrought was somewhat dark, Anne had carried the light frame upon which the linen groundwork of her picture was stretched, to one of the small windows looking upon the courtyard round which the mansion was built. Here, in the window recess, with her balls of colored



“HER HAND PAUSED AGAIN AND AGAIN OVER THE CANVAS,
AND HER EYES WANDERED TO THE COURT-
YARD WITHOUT.”—*Page 111.*

wools in a basket by her side, and the frame with its canvas stretched upon her knee, the young girl appeared to be pursuing her task. Her fingers, however, owing, perhaps, to the somewhat rough usage which she had recently received, hardly appeared so deft as usual; or perhaps it was that the subject of the picture she was engaged upon—the descent of Moses from Mount Sinai—did not interest her as it ought to have done. Her hand, at any rate, paused again and again over the canvas, and her eyes wandered to the courtyard without, where a continual coming and going of all sorts and conditions of men betokened the importance of the house's master in the affairs of the time. The point to which Anne's gaze wandered most frequently was the gateway almost opposite, under whose arch could be seen a portion of the narrow causeway outside, where another stream of people, not so numerous, but of even greater variety of character, passed on their way to and from the apartments of King Charles in the castle beyond. Many of these were in the sober garb of various cuts affected by the adherents of the Covenant; some wore the black cap and gown, with white neck-bands, which betokened ministers of the Kirk itself. Once and again there passed up the causeway the ringing tread of a soldier in

cuirasse and helmet, with tinkling spurs and clanking sabre. And occasionally the retinue of a covenanting noble could be seen, its master distinguished by his velvet bonnet and richly furred cloak. But it was when, once or twice in the course of the morning, there passed one in the unmistakable dress of the cavaliers, that Anne appeared to be most deeply interested.

One such had just gone by with leisured step, though his tread upon the pavement sounded somewhat clearer and more resolute than that of most who had passed. As his plumed hat was drawn low upon his brow, Anne would have seen nothing of his features, had it not been that as he went past he definitely turned and glanced into the courtyard. When he did so she caught a glimpse of his face, and at the same instant in which this happened, his eyes met her own. Judge of the reason who will, she had seemed upon the moment to be suddenly seized with confusion ; the needle had dropped from her fingers, and she had almost let fall the tapestry frame itself, while over forehead, cheek, and throat spread a blush, rosy, rapid, and embarrassing. Amid her confusion she was conscious that the cavalier, her protector of the day before, had gravely raised his hat and bowed, while she was all but certain, even at that distance, that he

too had shown something of heightened color as he did so.

Almost at the same moment Anne was startled by a voice in the room at her side. It was that of Argyle himself. Absorbed as she had been in watching the passers-by, she had heard nothing of his all but noiseless approach. He had not been slow to mark his daughter's evident interest in something occurring out-of-doors. He had also seen the sudden flush of excitement which had overspread her features; and in the hope of discovering the reason for himself, he had stepped quickly and noiselessly to her side. Rapid as was his movement, however, he was too late for his object, as Montrose had hardly paused for a moment before passing on.

Her father's voice, nevertheless, when he spoke, startled Anne by its proximity, while the sudden fear that he must have been a witness of whatever signs of feeling she had just exhibited, as well as the uncertainty as to how much he might have seen of the occurrence without, added in no small degree to the young lady's perturbation. It was only the habit of absolute respect and submission to parents which formed so strict a feature of the training of children at that time, which enabled her to act upon the instant with some appearance of self-possession.

“ I am glad to see that my daughter finds a fit employment for her leisure,” were the words with which Argyle addressed her ; and as she rose dutifully in his presence, he pressed her back to her place with one hand, while with the other he drew a chair to the spot and seated himself opposite. He took care, however, to be withdrawn a little way from the window, so as not to be seen from outside.

“ It is a hanging,” replied Anne with some trepidation, “ for the upper hall at home ; but the work——”

“ Does not, I gather, proceed so quickly here as at Inverary.”

As Argyle spoke, Anne looked up in the expectation of discovering some displeasure in his look. She was surprised to see, on the contrary, the nearest approach to a smile which was ever permitted to appear on her father’s features.

“ It is interesting,” she said, “ the coming and going of so many people, and so different !”

“ That interest is natural to the years of youth,” replied Argyle, “ and little harm, I would urge, is in it, if the interest become not particular in place of general, and a personal matter.”

The young girl, though she did not look up, was conscious that her father, as he said these words, regarded her with an intent gaze ; and the

consciousness of this, and of the question hidden in his remark, brought the color again slowly to her face.

“For the daughter of Argyle especially,” continued the marquis, “the idle fancies of ordinary maidens are no fit food for thought. Nay, hear me,” for Anne appeared about to interrupt; “I am aware that maids are apt to let their fancies wander to a gallant bearing or a pleasant wit, when some youth of such fair demeanor crosses their path, but for the Lady Anne Campbell——”

“Believe me, father,” exclaimed Anne, with something of entreaty in her voice, “believe me, I had no thought——”

“Tut, tut!” broke in Argyle, “such fancies, I say, are natural to thy years; and it is well, for men and women must wed, and marriage is honorable in the sight of Heaven. But in the mating of a daughter of the House of Argyle there are weighty considerations to be taken to account. It is not for the first time”—here the marquis spoke slowly, that his words might have full weight—“it is not for the first time that a Scottish family has been helped to the crowning of its fortunes by the gracious bearing of a girl.”

On hearing her father speak in this strain the color faded from Anne’s cheek, so well accustomed

were those about Argyle to look for some ulterior purpose in everything he said and did, and here the existence of an unrevealed design appeared unmistakable. She replied, nevertheless, with some spirit :

“The House of Campbell, almost alone among Scottish families, I have been told, has trusted for its advancement to the wisdom and bravery of its men rather than to the alliances of its daughters.”

It was Argyle's turn now to be somewhat discomfited by the drift of the discourse. What he thought did not transpire, though his daughter's words must have brought to his mind many transactions of recent years in which the fortunes of his house had been helped rather by craft than by wisdom, and rather by cruelty than by bravery. His features, nevertheless, remained unmoved, only one sharp glance betokening that he realized something of the metal beneath his daughter's gentle demeanor.

“It is true,” he said, “that hitherto our house has advanced mostly by the strength of its strong arm. It must be part of its wisdom, however, to perceive that times have changed, and that what was wont in rougher days to be done by might, belongs in these gentler times to the arts of policy. Frankly, my daughter, for I would deal in entire frankness with my child”—here Argyle scruti-

nized most narrowly the bowncast features of his fair listener—"frankly, I will tell you that the moment seems arrived when, in the wisdom of Providence, our house should take the place of foremost honor. Few would think it other than of happy omen that the final step depends on the will of a woman, and that woman my own child—the last and most dutiful daughter of the house itself."

As her father proceeded, Anne's face had bent lower and lower over the tapestry frame, till, seated as she was on a lower level than Argyle, her features were altogether concealed from his scrutiny, and it was only by the nervous movement of her fingers as she smoothed the surface of her work that he judged the effect of his words. After a moment's silence he leaned forward and took her hand.

"You do not speak, my daughter?" he said. "It is not every day, no, nor every hundred years, that a father, even of so high a house as that of Argyle, can offer his daughter so rich a prize. Our house's exaltation is not more in my heart than the happiness of the child whom Heaven has given me, when I tell her that there lies within her choice not only the hand of a gallant wooer, but the crown of these realms itself."

“The crown!” ejaculated Anne, withdrawing her hand and looking up, startled and breathless.

“The crown—I—the King——”

“It is as I have said,” replied Argyle, rising, well satisfied with the effect he had produced, and wise enough to leave the announcement as it stood, without enhancement, to work its own effect on the imagination of the young girl. “Within a few days, I have good reason to believe, there will lie within the option of the daughter of Argyle the acceptance of the hand of King Charles and the crown of Scotland. Should she answer unwisely and rebuff the royal suitor, it will be to bring her father’s hairs, in these critical times, not alone to the grave, but almost certainly to dishonor and—the block.” Here Argyle himself paused for a second and became a trifle pale, as the possible truth of his own words came home to him. But as he saw Anne shudder, he hastened to pursue his advantage. “This, I doubt not, will have weight in thy thoughts as a dutiful daughter, that the blessing of Heaven may crown the blessing of thy father, ‘and that thy days may be long in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee.’”

Argyle, as he made this quotation from the fourth commandment, laid his hand for a moment on his daughter’s head; then turning, without

another word he left her. As he passed out of the chamber, however, he cast a single rapid glance behind him. Anne was still sitting in the window recess, but her work had fallen from her knee, and her needle from her hand, and bending forward, with the sunlight falling on her soft brown hair and gray-clad figure, she had buried her face in her hands.

CHAPTER IX.

“The king rade round the Merecleuch-head,
Booted and spurred, as we a’ did see ;
Syne dined wi’ a lass at Mossfennan yett,
A little below the Logan Lea.”

Old Song.

A FEW days after the occurrence of the incidents which we have related, the King removed to Edinburgh. There he was immediately under the eye both of the Convention of Estates, as the Scottish Parliament was then called, and of the Commission of Assembly. In these circumstances he was not likely to suffer from lack of the ministrations of the zealous preachers of the Kirk. These individuals manifested an interest in his spiritual welfare which, under the circumstances, he was fain to tolerate, but which in its crude austerity was not a little irksome to the youthful monarch. Besides the lengthy lectures each morning and evening, at which his unfailing attendance was expected, frequent days of fasting and humiliation were appointed, and in the sermons which on these occasions succeeded each

other without intermission, the preachers, by way of attracting the King to their own particular form of doctrine, seldom failed to animadvert upon the blood-guiltiness of his father and the idolatry of his mother. To these ministrations, however rude and wearisome, in the hope of conciliating the Church party, Charles accorded a polite attention.* Presuming upon this sufferance, the preachers would have proceeded to take the entire ruling of his private life into their own hands; but here he drew the line. Out of consideration for their views he refrained from the walk which he would have enjoyed of a Sunday evening, and he restrained the natural inclination of his years so far as to deny himself other harmless amusements at times which might have seemed to them sinful. But when, under the title of carnal indulgence, they sought to prohibit his enjoyment of the pleasures of the chase, he gave them to understand that in these matters he must himself be judge of his own actions.

The necessity of keeping a close time for game

* "He wrought himself into as grave a deportment as he could; he heard many prayers and sermons, some of great length. I remember in one fast-day there were six sermons preached without intermission. I was there myself, and not a little weary of so tedious a service."—*Burnet's Memoirs*, p. 422.

was not then understood as it is now, and thus it came about that so early as the beginning of August the King was able to escape occasionally from his reverend monitors, and forget the cares of his position for a space in the most exhilarating of all pastimes.

It was on the morning on which one of these royal hunting-parties set out that, as Mr. John Nevoy was conducting worship before the assembled household of the Marquis of Argyle, an incident occurred, which might perhaps appear small in itself, but which was taken as significant enough by at least one who noticed it.

The mansion in Edinburgh then occupied by Argyle stood on the Castle-hill, and from its lofty windows an ample view was afforded of the undulating country on the further side of the North Loch, pasture and cornland, intersected by dry-stone and turf dykes—hedges not yet having been introduced*—with a few trees here and there about low, brown-thatched “farm-towns,” and the crow-stepped gables of a manor or two in the distance. Such was the landscape which, on a clear day, could be made out as far as the silver-shining Firth of Forth.

* Hedges are said only to have been introduced to Scotland by the soldiers of Cromwell during that general’s occupation of the country later.

Familiar enough it must already have become to the Lady Anne Campbell, seeing that she had now lived within sight of it for a full summer month at this time. There was therefore the less excuse for her if she allowed her attention upon this particular morning, as she sat near the casement, to wander away from the periods of Mr. Nevoy's doctrinal exposition. The last of the morning haze, just then disappearing in the blue of the sky, for the hour was early, lent an additional charm to the outlook, and might have been a sufficient spell to lull the day-dreams of an idle maid. But the Lady Anne, as she glanced aside, perhaps not altogether unexpectantly, had caught sight of a gay, somewhat numerous, troop of horsemen coming westward along the rising country beyond the Nor' Loch below. One of these, clad in dark green, with a rich white plume dancing in his hat, who rode a fine cream-colored jennet a full length in front of the rest, she knew to be the King. Every minute he would turn, apparently to exchange some pleasantry with one or other of his companions. These latter were evidently in the gayest spirits, and as, cantering, caracoling, and leaping light obstacles by the path, the party made rapidly westward, one of them put a horn to his lips and blew a blast that came up clear and full on the morning air above

the yelping of the gaze-hounds which ran by the horsemen's feet.

The sound itself was not unpleasant, bespeaking, as it did, the natural exuberance and joyous freedom of open-air life. But falling upon the ears of the Reverend Mr. Nevoy in the pause between his "lastly" and his peroration, it came as the direct challenge of an enemy to battle, and he was not slow in replying to it.

"Behold," he cried, in a burst of inspired rhetoric, "the ungodly go forth with a noise of trumpets, and they that bow the knee in the house of Rimmon with shouting and a song. Yet, I say, must there be a purging of Israel; yet must the lofty be brought low, and they that set their feet in high places be humbled in the dust. Woe to the remnant of the chosen if the Malignants be not cut off from their midst! For the sins of their princes in the day of battle they shall be scattered as chaff before the whirlwind, they shall be consumed as stubble before the fire. Wherefore, I say, let the followers of false prophets be separated from the elect even by the dividing of the sword, and woe be unto all those that join themselves with the accursed brood!"

This deliverance, uttered with the full force of vituperative elocution, fell with curiously varied effect, it may be understood, upon the ears of

the several listeners. The marchioness did not resist casting a significant glance of inquiry at her husband, seeking to discover, if she might, the result upon his mind of the declaration of religious and political party feeling which had just been made. Argyle himself, without a change in the expression to which he was in the habit of composing his countenance during divine service, yet betrayed a certain feeling of impatience by the manner in which he altered his listening attitude.

The Lady Anne proved less able to command her feelings. The tentative approaches which had been made by her father before leaving Stirling, together with one or two circumstances which had occurred since, had brought vividly home to her the part which in filial duty, and in duty to the cause of her family and the State, she was expected to play. With this in her mind, as well as certain other hardly defined emotions perhaps, of which the reader must presently be allowed to judge, the words of the preacher touched her to a point beyond endurance. Her nostril quivered in the effort to breathe, the blood fled from cheek and lip, and with a deep sigh she sank lifeless across the arm of her seat.

“My bonnie bairn!”

It was the marchioness who, noticing what had

happened, sprang with a cry to her daughter's help. Lifting the maid in her arms, with the aid of the nurse and one or two domestics she carried her from the room, darting as she went a look of significant reproach at the countenance of Argyle.

"My daughter," said the latter, apparently unmoved, as the door closed behind the party, "has swooned with the morning heat."

The preacher himself, after regarding with a look of scorn what he probably considered the fleshly weakness of the lady of the house, resumed the service with a stern "Let us pray."

"Amen!" said Argyle.

Meanwhile in an adjoining apartment all the resources of the household were being brought into requisition for the recovery of Lady Anne. Her bodice laces were cut, the ivory-pale palms of her hands gently beat, and burnt feathers and other reputed restoratives applied to her nostrils. At last these efforts proved so far successful that the patient opened her eyes.

"Forgive me," she said, with a pitiful little smile, as she turned to her mother. "It was a foolish weakness, and the heat of the room overcame me. I will rest for an hour or two, and then nurse will come with me to take the air in the afternoon."

"Heat of the room, my bairn!" echoed the

Lady of Argyle, *sotto voce*; "I would it might be naught else." Then she added aloud, "Indeed it was folly that set ye to sit so near to the dizzy lattice. Our gentle bird of the moors, methinks, sits but ill at ease on the eaglet's perch."

CHAPTER X.

“ There’s three score o’ nobles rade up the king’s ha’,
But bonnie Glenlogie’s the flower o’ them a’;
Wi’ his milk-white steed and his bonnie black e’e,
Glenlogie, dear mither, Glenlogie for me ! ”

Scots Ballad.

IN the early days of Charles II., in Scotland dinner was not eaten at an hour when folk who would keep their health should be thinking of going to bed. The meal was a midday one, eaten at one or two o’clock in the afternoon, and enjoyed perhaps with a heartier zest since it was neither cramped by the name of luncheon nor accompanied by fear of midnight dyspepsia.

It was not until this function was over that Lady Anne begged her nurse to accompany her upon the walk which she had suggested in the morning. Regarding this proposal, however, there appeared to be two opinions. Mistress Marjory Warnock was one of those privileged domestics who by long familiarity with their charge have come to look upon the free expression of their opinion as nothing more than a

natural right. In the present instance, accordingly, the dame made no scruple about stating her disinclination to move abroad.

“It is a hot day, I will be thinking,” she exclaimed, somewhat querulously in her half-English, half-Highland speech—“It is a hot day to steer out-of-doors. Dinna ye see how the castle hill reeks in the sun? It is of these afternoon walks i’ the heat, forby the folk that are met in them”—here the good woman gave a significant toss of her head—“that the faintings of the morning come. There are sorrows enough in store for us, I warrant, without our going half-way to meet them. What wad the marquis, your father, say, I am wondering, if he kent the bonnie goings-on there have been—the stolen trysts and chance meetings, that were like to be chancy enough if some eyne had happened to spy them out? What wad he say to me, I am asking, if he kent that I had seen all and said nothing? It wad be a short step and a lang swing, or a lodging in the black dungeon at Inverary. But I will be running sic risks no more, for *mo nighean shian* or for myself. So ye will just be guided by me and take the air at your ain lattice this afternoon.”

While her nurse spoke in this strain the cheek of Lady Anne had alternately flushed and paled,

and it was with something of reproach that she replied—

“It is late in the day to speak like this, Nurse Maisie, and it is little gratitude for the service that was done us by my Lord of Montrose some weeks ago in the Lennox.”

“That was a service,” returned Mistress Warronck, “that may cost us dear. It has been the excuse already for mair kindness to the doer of it than prudence wad warrant. Mony anither young gentleman wad give his ears to do as mekill for a bonnie face, and here have been talks and walks accorded, wi’ none near but a foolish auld nurse that should have had better sense than to lippen as much, till I fear—I fear—there has been mair thought gi’en that can be askit back again. Tak’ my word for it—there’s little trust to be put in young men, for as fair as their looks and their speech may be—it’s Mary ae day and Jean the next. Take my word for it, and think on nane o’ them. The daughter of Argyle need never cast a sigh for the finest goshawk of them all. So be guided, and bid the idle thought o’ my young Lord of Montrose good-bye. It was a playing wi’ edge tools at the best, and, sooner or later, some ane’s fingers but to be cut. Better now than later, I say; and the least said the soonest mended.”

“If these are your thoughts, nurse,” answered

the young lady in a low voice, and with a somewhat tremulous accent, "you will be ready to help me to bid farewell to my Lord of Montrose. It grieves me to lead you, my dear Maisie, into any danger; but, believe me, it is but once more. Bring me my new lilac hat with the feather, and my courchief of Antwerp gossamer, and make yourself ready. We will walk as before in the shady path under the castle rock, and if indeed we meet my lord I will give him to know that it is—it is—for the last time."

At these words Mistress Warnock darted a quick look, partly of surprise, partly of distrust, at her charge. The face of the latter, however, was sincerity itself.

"Weel, weel!" she exclaimed, when she had been thus reassured. "Is it thus the wind blows sae soon? They say men are fickle, but nane that says that kens the heart o' a young lass. Ay, ay! but I'm thinking it will be a sair speech for my young lord, who is a gallant lord and a generous, after the worst has been said—if it werena that he comes of the bloody race o' Graham. He's but young yet, though, being but barely twenty, though his father, to be sure, the cruel Montrose, was but seventeen when he married; * and doubt-

* The Great Marquis, when a youth, attending St. Andrew's University in 1630, fell in love with and married Lady Magdalene

less he will see some other fair face ere lang, and console himsel' for the fickleness o' Argyle's daughter wi' a bride from a nest nearer his hand. So I will e'en get your courchief and my ain hood, and we will take the path below the castle rock." And the good woman hurried away with the greatest satisfaction to find the desired articles, entirely oblivious of the effect of her words on her young mistress, whom she left as pale as if she were on the point of repeating her fainting experience of the morning.

By the time her nurse returned, however, Lady Anne had sufficiently recovered her composure, though she remained tremulous and singularly silent as they left the house, and took the path leading from the Castle hill downwards towards the west.

At that date, as now, there existed a natural growth of wooding about the sloping ground below the north face of the fortress rock. In time of war, it is true, that growth was wont to be cut down for fear of its affording cover to attacking parties of besiegers. Neglect of this precaution, indeed, more than once, as in the time of Robert the Bruce, led to the capture of the stronghold. By the summer of 1650, however, this natural

Carnegy, one of the six daughters of Lord Southesk, of Kinneard Castle close by.

growth had had time since it was last destroyed to attain some size, and while furnishing a screen of pleasant greenery to parts of the otherwise frowning and forbidding precipices, it afforded welcome cover to a path which, sufficiently romantic and retired, wound here and there under the crag, descending finally to lose itself in the open country westwards. It was along this path that Anne and her attendant now directed their steps, judging from experience that they were likely to meet with few wayfarers in so unfrequented a resort.

The reader will have gathered from the remarks of Mistress Warnock chronicled above that this was by no means the first time since coming to Edinburgh that the daughter of Argyle had suffered herself to be met by the young gallant who had afforded her such timely service a month before. Upon arriving in the capital she had happened upon the path under the castle as the most convenient and pleasant place in which to take the air with her nurse. Here, at first by accident, she had been met by young Montrose, who had hit upon the track as a speedy and secret means of access to the city after a visit to the west. Upon that occasion, both cavalier and lady being of an age when such things happen quickly, their former acquaintance had developed into a

mutual regard, which in the circumstances was as dangerous as it was enchanting to the persons concerned. Mrs. Warnock's feudal aversion to the son of her master's mortal enemy had been overcome no less by the reproaches and persuasions of her young mistress than by the good looks and generous gifts of Montrose himself. There are few things, moreover, which a matron can so ill resist as the chance of bearing a part in bringing two young people to an understanding. Again and again, accordingly, Anne and Montrose had met, till the story of Montague and Capulet seemed on the point of being reproduced between the rival houses of the north.

Meanwhile it made no small part of the distress of the young lady that she was not at liberty to inform her lover of the ambitious designs which her father had shadowed forth to her. In her moments of retirement the thought tortured her like a nightmare. At first, when she had met Montrose since coming to Edinburgh, she had too readily persuaded herself that the intimacy was a harmless one, and so the mischief was done almost before she had time to reflect. Now, however, every day increased her terror and despair. It is true that her father had so far made no additional communications to her, but in a man of his character this was by no means to be taken as a

relinquishment of his design. On the contrary, as Anne well knew, he was only likely to be maturing his project. With this dreadful secret oppressing her heart, Anne had again and again determined to intimate to her lover that they must meet no more. But on each occasion, when they met, she had yielded to the delirious pleasure of the meeting, and half with misery and half with rapture she had let her purpose fade from her mind for the time.

It will be seen, therefore, that there was reason to account for the look of expectant eagerness which lighted up the countenance of Montrose when, by the aid of an overhanging alder branch, he swung himself from a rock above the path and alighted almost at the feet of Lady Anne.

He was still dressed in mourning black, it is true, as became the situation of his family; but within the last month a considerable change otherwise had taken place in his appearance. The energy and exertion which had been called for by the affairs of the King, as well perhaps as the prospect of reinstating his family fortunes which the success of Charles seemed to promise, had developed rapidly the inherited strength and decision of his character as displayed in his features, and there was in his air a resource and

purpose which perhaps had been the chief characteristic lacking at the earlier date of our story. It might not perhaps be unfair to attribute the heightened color of his complexion as he swung himself to the path, as much to the pleasure he felt at the meeting with his mistress as to the exercise in the hunting-field, with which of late he had begun to renew his acquaintance.

The sudden appearance of her lover before her in the manner which we have described, at first startled Anne out of remembrance of the purpose with which she had approached the interview. A flush of uncontrolled pleasure swept across her features and lit up her eyes, and when, with a word of endearment, he caught her hand and pressed it to his lips, she seemed to have lost the power to resist. But the look of delight as quickly died away again from her face, leaving the features of an ashen paleness, as she withdrew her hand.

At the moment Mrs. Warnock, judicious woman! was some considerable distance in the rear, fastening the latchet of her shoe.

As the Graham looked up in questioning surprise, Lady Anne with downcast lashes faltered forth the words, "I have done you wrong, my lord."

"That is impossible," returned Montrose with

grave tenderness, "so surely as you have been true to yourself."

"Alas!" answered Anne, while a faint color tinged her cheek like a cameo, "had I but been falser to my own heart I had been more faithful to you."

"You speak in parables to-day, sweetheart," answered the young nobleman, with a gathering cloud of alarm on his brow. "Be plain with me, that if I have done aught amiss I may explain or atone. Of one thing I am assured—there is not more stainless truth in heaven itself than in the heart of Anne of Argyle. Have we not known each other now for a whole long month?"

At these words the face of Anne flushed once more with irresistible pleasure, and there was no mistaking the look in her eyes as she lifted them to her lover. But she answered piteously:

"My lord, my lord! if you have thought all this of me, what must you think now? I should have known—I should have remembered that it was impossible, that it was madness to think of friendship between the Houses of Montrose and Argyle. It had been better—oh! it had been better we had never met; and now we must say farewell, and meet—no—more."

The last words were spoken almost inaudibly, but they were loud enough for the ear of Mont-

rose. There was a look of pain on his face as he took her hand.

"Sweetheart," he said tenderly, "put me not to extremity too far. You have not ceased to love me?"

"Oh, no, no!" she exclaimed in distress.

"Then," he returned, in a tone of some anger, "who is it that has dared to put estrangement between us? There have been dark and sorrowful deeds, it is true, between the Houses of Argyle and Montrose, but it is not with the race of Argyle that the debt of feud now lies, nor is there on earth so wide a gulf but Heaven might build the bridge of love across. His blood and the blood of his race be on the head of the man who would break that bridge now! Has my Lord of Argyle found out our tryst? Is it he who would set a barrier between us?"

"Believe me," exclaimed Anne, eagerly, "my father has uttered to me no word of you, my lord. It was—I—I—the duty of a child——"

"Then," said Montrose, slowly, letting fall her hand, "it is of your own mind that you speak? Can it be true that you indeed love me no more?" With these words he gazed earnestly upon her face, as if he would read in it her thoughts, but she did not raise her eyes. After a moment, as

she did not reply, he added, sadly enough, and in a low voice, "Farewell!"

He had turned away and had already moved several steps down the path when he heard behind him a half articulate cry. He paused with a look of surprise and hope. Anne was standing with pale face and quivering lip where he had left her. He returned and took her hand.

"Sweetheart," he said tenderly, "it is for you to say farewell."

As she did not answer, but, with swimming eyes, seemed ominously near to tears, he passed his arm around her and drew her to him.

"My love," he whispered, "speak from your own heart only in the sight of Heaven—is it farewell?"

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "I cannot say it!" and with a sob she buried her face in his breast.

"Neither shall it be said," he exclaimed with sudden fervor, "while sweet Anne of Argyle is true to her own heart, or there is a drop of blood in the veins of Montrose." And folding her in his arms he pressed an ardent kiss on her unresisting lips.

At that moment the lovers were interrupted by a sound of voices and footsteps on the path below, and Anne had but barely time, after a hurried adieu, to retreat with her nurse by a

by-path through one of the thickets, when the King himself came into sight round a corner of the ascent.

"By yonder flying skirt," exclaimed he laughing, as he came up to his somewhat disconcerted adherent, "our Lord of Montrose appears to have had better luck in the chase of Venus than we in the chase of Diana, and we must ask him a thousand pardons if our intrusion has startled the quarry. Henceforth, we must take your excuses of absence from our hunt, my lord, as no more than an expression of preference for drawing more private and exciting coverts."

CHAPTER XI.

“Let never man a-wooing wend
That lacketh thingis thrie—
A rowth o’ gowd, an open heart,
And fu’ o’ courtesie.”

Ballad of “King Henrie.”

ON the evening of the day in which the pleasures of the chase had been enjoyed by the Court in the neighborhood of Edinburgh, with the concluding incident which had been described, Mr. Aaron Crookshanks might have been seen making his way towards a certain close in the south side of the Netherbow with a step which, compared with his usual solemn pace, was quite sprightly and alert. His outward man upon this evening presented an appearance greatly improved from that of the last occasion on which he figured before the reader. Then, owing to the contingencies and mishaps of a missionary enterprise for which he was but indifferently adapted, his person and dress exhibited a dishevelment and discomposure hardly compatible with the character

which he was fain to assume. Here, however, on the causeway of Edinburgh, and among the comforts afforded by the ministrations of the faithful, he was more at home, and on this particular evening, from the crown of his black cloth bonnet to the iron buckles of the large shoes in which he shuffled briskly along, small fault could have been found with his attire. His black coat, if somewhat ill-fitting, had been diligently brushed, and the ends of a clean white cravat fell over his undervest in such a fashion that they might quite easily have been mistaken for a minister's bands; while his breeches, if the same pair, showed no signs of the rough usage to which they had been subjected at Killearn Inn, and his black woollen stockings, no longer hanging in wrinkles, but gartered tightly up, displayed at their best the missionary's rather bony nether limbs. Taking all together, by his general aspect and carriage, one would have supposed Mr. Crookshanks to be meditating a visit of considerable interest and importance.

Perceiving a couple of Highlanders coming up through the Netherbow port from the Canongate, and undesirous of meeting individuals who might prove to be acquaintances of an unpleasant sort, he quickened his pace still further in order to reach the close for which he was making before

he should encounter them. It was owing to this haste that, as he turned at last into the entry, he all but ran against the person of a young woman who was coming out. He had presence of mind, looking up and recognizing the interrupter of his passage to ejaculate, "Good even to you, Mistress Frew. Your worthy aunt, Mrs. Murdoch, will be at home, I think?" He had time as well to notice that the young woman was not without an escort, who was no other than our acquaintance, Neil Guthrie, when he was unceremoniously pushed aside with an exclamation by the stout yeoman, and Neil and Bessie disappeared in the street.

"Verily a saucy wench!" exclaimed Crookshanks, as he resumed his passage up the close. "Moreover," he added, on second thoughts, "a comely face, and one that might work mischief if she took to making laughter at a man. It behoves me to be forward in this matter, and—and it will be but just to let Mrs. Murdoch know that her niece has been seen thus familiar with one of the Malignants."

Reflecting thus sagaciously, he made his way up three spiral flights of stairs in the front tenement, passing upon each landing a door which was the entrance to a separate dwelling. Pausing at last before one of these entrances, he lifted the ring which hung in the place of the modern

knocker, and shaking it up and down its iron bar, "tirled at the pin."

The door was opened by a maid who, in answer to the visitor's solemn inquiry for her mistress, desired him to "step ben," and ushered him presently into the "best parlor" of the house.

The "best parlor" in Scottish houses of the middle class was a room used only for visitors and on state occasions. It was the room in which heavy family functions, such as marriage and funeral services, were wont to be celebrated, the room in which wills were read and august visitors interviewed. The members of the household contented themselves with a humbler apartment, frequently enough the kitchen itself, which, with its spinning-wheels and noisy wag-at-the-wa' clock, and its well-worn wooden arm-chairs and window-seats, was in reality a much more comfortable place. The room, accordingly, into which Mr. Crookshanks had been shown was an apartment of some state and restraint. The tall-backed chairs and the bees-waxed floor, the many-paned corner cupboards and the bright, brass fire-dogs on the hearth, all wore an air of being but seldom used. A portrait of the late Mr. Murdoch, who had been a prosperous mercer and linendraper in the Luckenbooths, and had owned part besides of several ships trading between

Leith and Rotterdam, hung over the fireplace, and lent an additional solemnity to the room. All this had begun to exercise some depressing effect on the spirits of Crookshanks as he sat stiffly with his cap on his knee, cracking his knuckles as they clasped the head of his bone-topped staff, when the door opened and the elderly widow herself appeared. The angular countenance of the missionary wreathed itself in an engaging smile as the worthy woman greeted him.

"It's you, my dear Mr. Crookshanks!" she said, with a certain air between familiarity and respect, as she courtesied to her visitor. "Maybe ye will just step to the kitchen where I'm sitting mysel'. The new lassie's but a giddy thing, and apt to let her wheel stan' when my back's turned, forbye I'm packin' Bessie's trunk there for the carrier the morn. Edinburgh'll be but a kittle place for a young lass gin the English loons win in, so I'm e'en sending her back to her father for fear."

The comfortable person of the widow was not without certain charms of a substantial sort, but as he followed her along the passage to the spotless kitchen, it is doubtful whether the eyes of Mr. Aaron Crookshanks were not rather set upon attractions more commercially calculable. The late lamented mercer and linendraper had left his

consort sufficiently well provided for to be above the necessity of making any effort for her own livelihood. Besides the house itself in which she lived, and a comfortable sum of hard cash lent out upon good security, she was still possessor of those lucrative part-shares in the shipping of Leith which had belonged to her husband. Placed thus above the most pressing cares which are apt to weigh upon the mind and engross the attention of lone women in her situation, she had turned for occupation to the ordinances of religion, and, after the fashion of her sex, had been apt to lavish upon its officials, as more tangible than an abstract institution, the devotion which she felt for the Church itself. In fact, she was one of those worthy women, not yet far to seek, who identify the service of Heaven with the entertainment of its agents, and anything in a black coat which came with a sufficient recommendation of sanctity was certain of profound respect, liberal support, and generous hospitality at her hands. Such a character is not likely to be allowed to rust for lack of exercising its bounty, and the fact that she had more than once been egregiously taken in by wolves in shepherd's clothing, had apparently in no way lessened her inclination to make much of the next pious parasite who offered. So far, indeed, was she apt to carry her hospitable

ministrations to those self-constituted saints, that already upon at least one occasion she had been afforded the generous opportunity of changing her condition. That unlooked-for dénouement, however, had had no more than temporary effect upon the good woman's treatment of the preachers, lay and cleric, who came in her way, and Mr. Aaron Crookshanks, the latest of these, had had good reason to congratulate himself on making the acquaintance of this entertainer of the elect.

"Tak' a seat on the settle, sir," she exclaimed, as she led the way into the kitchen. "And, Ailie, dinna sit handless there, but set by your wheel and spread the table for supper. There's a breast o' capercailzie in the cupboard, that my brother, my Lord Moray's keeper, sent me out o' Menteith. And set out the shouther o' salmon as weel. Mr. Crookshanks will excuse such plain fare on an occasion." *

"No excuse is needed, my dear Mrs. Murdoch," returned the missionary. "Was not the prophet sufficiently nourished in the wilderness with no more than a cake baked upon the coals, and by

* Our readers will no doubt be familiar enough with the fact that domestic servants in Scotland, so late as the beginning of the present century, were wont to make a stipulation, before engaging themselves, that they should not be required to eat salmon oftener than four times a week, so plentiful was the fish in those days.

that are we not to understand that our carnal appetites must be weaned from things of sense?"

At the same time the eyes of the semi-reverend gentleman glistened as they saw the succulent breast of capercailzie put down, and alongside it a liberal jug of generous double ale. His worthy hostess, however, engaged in her hospitable preparations, while she heard the remark, did not notice the look.

"Ah! Mr. Crookshanks," she exclaimed, "it's ill getting the like o' you, wha's thochts are set on higher things, to partake o' bite or sup. But I wad mind ye, wi' a' humility, that Elijah was in the desert o' Canaan, and they say folks dinna need so mony victuals in warm countries. The hands o' the Lord's servants maun be upheld, and their bodies sustained. Forbye, now that I look at ye, I wad say that ye have had but sma' fare on your travels; I doubt ye have thocht ower little o' your bodily welfare during thae visitations."

"It was to see how the vine flourished and the pomegranate budded that I went forth," answered Crookshanks, with zealous resignation, "and not to minister to my fleshly desires; though I will not say but that I might be fitter for the work of the vineyard were I less left to my own provision. It is difficult to bend the mind from subjects of

spiritual import to mere things of meat and drink. Ah! my dear Mrs. Murdoch, happy indeed are those servants of the Covenant who have a helpmeet to sustain their hands!"

This last sentiment was accompanied by a look which was intended to be piously pathetic, but it was entirely thrown away upon the good woman, who at that instant was engaged in bringing from its locked receptacle her supply of best glass and cutlery, her own domestic needs being usually served by less pretentious gear.

"And how," she asked, when she found time to turn again to her guest, "how did ye find the country that was set apart for your visitation? I trust when weighed i' the balances o' righteous judgment it wasna found a'thegether wanting."

"Alas! my dear sister, if I may so call one to whom I have been drawn by strong cords of—of spiritual sympathy, I found the land lying under a gross darkness. In the Highland country, indeed, so little regard had they for the mission with which I had charged myself that it was not without bodily molesting that I escaped. Such, however, was the lot of the disciples of old time, who underwent buffetings and castings out, and I do not cherish a revengeful spirit. Moreover, here I have a list of ministers to submit to the

reverend Commission of Assembly for purging of their worldly seeking and Arminianism, against all of whom I have found grounds of testifying." *

"Dear, dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Murdoch, with some concern, as she glanced at the list produced, "the country maun be in but a dark and heathen state when sae mony are found striking oot o' the path. It is weel there are zealous sons o' the Covenant like yoursel', Mr. Crookshanks, to see that backsliders are brocht to judgment. But," and she turned to the table upon which the maid had just set the last of the viands, "our bit supper is ready—ye will excuse the slightness o' it—will you draw in the armchair, and I wad beg of ye to ask the blessing."

The guest displayed no reluctance whatever to accede to this request, and after a "blessing" of a length sufficient to guarantee the profoundest piety at a time when that commodity was appraised as much by the quantity as by the quality of its demonstrations, Mr. Crookshanks tackled

* "In the months of September and October the Synod of Angus and Mearns deposed eighteen ministers for insufficiency of the ministry, famishing of congregations, silence in the time of the late engagement against England, malignancy, and drunkenness."—*Beattie's Hist. of Church of Scotland during the Commonwealth*, chap. I.

to the contents of the platters before him with a zest which spoke little of religious or any other asceticism. The huge helpings with which he supplied himself, both of salmon and of capercailzie—a game bird since extinct, and only reintroduced to Scotland lately, but then common enough in the country—soon made an obvious impression upon the victuals, while he did not fail to make use of his hostess's generous home-brewed in order to wash the viands down.

It was then, having tasted but slightly herself of the good things provided, that Mrs. Murdoch informed her guest that there was a matter of some importance on her mind regarding which she wished to have his counsel and assistance.

Such an intimation from one of the fair sex is enough at any time to stir the vanity of most men, and it is needless to say that upon Mr. Aaron Crookshanks, rendered valiant by his hearty meal, and suspected as he might be of entertaining tender sentiments towards the possessions if not the person of his entertainer, its effect was certain and ominous.

“My dear Mrs. Murdoch,” he exclaimed effusively, leaning towards her with what was doubtless meant to be a fascinating gaze,—“may I say my very dear Mrs. Murdoch, if in anything my poor wisdom or knowledge can serve you—and I

can foresee circumstances in which a woman in your position might be greatly profited by the experience and presence of a—a brother in the faith—be assured you may confide in me.”

“I wanted to ask your opinion,” replied the good woman, “upon a circumstance concerning the conduct o’ the King’s house that cam’ within my ain cognizance.”

“The King’s house!” exclaimed Crookshanks, looking up quickly at the suggestion, like grimal-kin at the flutter of a linnet’s wings. “That is a most important matter which it is your duty to make known at once. The malignancy of the Court is one of the chief stumbling-blocks and stones of offence to the faithful, and woe has been denounced against those that would cloak its backsliding.”

“Ill would it beseem me to bring trouble on the gallant young King,” answered Mrs. Murdoch; “but he is but young, and youth may gang an ill gait if left unguided, so I will e’en tell ye what I saw, and maybe ye could speak to some o’ the worthy ministers o’ the Commission; for the wrath o’ Heaven canna but be brought down by profane ongoings o’ the sort.”

“Profane ongoings!” cried Crookshanks, now fairly scenting high quarry. “Speak plainly, in the name of the Covenant, that the nation be not

swallowed up for the iniquity of those in high places."

"Ailie, lass, gang ben and see that the creuzie on the stairhead's burning," said the good woman thus adjured, in order to get the maid out of ear-shot. "I wadna hae Bessie break her shins comin' up i' the dark." Then, the girl having departed, she turned to her impatient guest. "Ye maun ken that his Majesty has been lodged for the last three or four nights at my Lord Tweeddale's near by, and the windows o' the royal apartments being opposite mine, but on the story below, ye may believe I could tak' tent o' what was carrying on inside. It was yestreen, after prayers, when the worthy Mr. Patrick Gillespie had broken the Word to the King's household there in my ain sight, and had gane hame, I could scarcely believe my eyne when I saw the young gentlemen sit down again at table, whip out some packs o' playing cards, and begin their godless pastime."

"My dear Mrs. Murdoch," exclaimed Crookshanks, rising to his feet, "this is a most serious matter, and it is well that it has been made known to a true son of the Covenant. I will go hence at once, and make the King's falling-away known in the proper quarter. But first I would look from your window. It may be that I may see and behold with my own eyes, that in the

mouths of two witnesses the evil may stand revealed."

Mrs. Murdoch led the way to the window of a neighboring room, from which she had made her observation, and there, obvious enough, in the suite of chambers on the opposite side of the narrow passage below, the young King was to be recognized, unconscious of hostile observation from outside, again enjoying a friendly game of piquet with a small party of the Court.

"Verily," exclaimed the onlooker with fervor, "the Lord has revealed the iniquity in Israel. Can men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Malignancy must be cut off, root and branch, alike from the Court and the camp, if the host of the elect would not be given to utter destruction before the face of their enemies."

"Indeed, I trust," said Mrs. Murdoch, now half fearful that her information was about to lead to much more serious results than she had anticipated, "I trust the King will be willing to listen to reproof. It wad be a sair thought to have the breeding o' darker mischief laid at a puir widow's door."

"The King must be brought to see the error of his ways; the tree must be hewn down and cast into the fire if it bear not due fruit," returned Crookshanks. Then turning at what he con-

ceived to be his opportunity, he gazed straight at his hostess, and added significantly: "Let her who has done a service to Israel beware that she harbor not in her own house one of the Agagites. To be plain," he proceeded, as he perceived his words to have some effect on the good woman, "my dear Mrs. Murdoch, did I not this night behold with my own eyes the henchman of a chief Malignant, an attendant on my Lord of Graham, in the company of your niece?"

"The factor of Montrose," returned Mrs. Murdoch in some confusion, "is a sturdy yeoman. It is true he has been lippened to show some attention to Bessie since she came on her visit here. And to say truth, I thought gin the English loons did force their way into our town it might be as weel to have some strong neive at hand to fend a lonely woman's gear."

"Be warned by me," answered Crookshanks, "and have no dealings with the Amalekites, if ye would not yourself be marked out as one bringing a curse upon Israel. Cut off this young man, and believe, my dear—my very dear Mrs. Murdoch, there is another, even myself, at hand, who is ready to the uttermost to defend you and yours, if ye will but give him the warrant."

At this point, favored by the darkness of the room in which they were standing, the enterpris-

ing Crookshanks ventured so far as to take and gently press his hostess's hand.

It is impossible to say what her answer might have been, since just at that moment the pin of the outer door was tirmed, and Guthrie, marching into the house with Bessie behind him, announced in a loud voice that the removal of his sweetheart and her things would be impossible that night, as it was said the English were marching on the town and the gates must presently be closed. At this moment the distant sound of cannonading could be distinctly heard, and a trampling of hoofs and flashing of lights in the court below announced that the party of the King had broken up, and that its members were already hurrying off to the scene of action.

Just then, when his direction of affairs might have been of some service in the widow's household, Mr. Crookshanks, strangely enough, was nowhere to be seen.

CHAPTER XII.

“The king was coming through Caddonford,
And full five thousand men had he ;
They saw the dark forest them before,
They thought it awesome for to see.”

“Sang of the Outlaw Murray.”

THE events of the month of July in the year 1650 are familiar enough to the readers of Scottish history. It was with alarm as well as chagrin that the leaders of the Independent party in England had learned of the landing and proposed establishment of the young King Charles in the sister kingdom. After their high-handed execution of Charles I. in the previous year, it formed no part of their plan to allow the peaceful settlement of the son of that monarch in such dangerous vicinity. If Charles II. were suffered to assume his ancestral rights to the separate kingdom of Scotland, the Parliamentary leaders of the south were assured that at no time should they be able to count on their own immunity from Royalist attempts. Accordingly, in entire dis-

regard of all other considerations than those of their own safety, and in complete oblivion of the right of the northern kingdom to a monarch and government of its own, the English Independents gathered together an army for the purpose of preventing the accession of Charles II. to the throne of Scotland. The command of this army, as may have been gathered in the course of our tale, had first been offered to General Fairfax, but had been refused by that commander from a disinclination to fight against a party of his own Presbyterian persuasion. No such scruples, however, affected the mind of the Independent general, Cromwell, freshly home from an Irish campaign in which his soldiers had distinguished themselves by special cruelty. With his customary energy and promptitude he organized the Parliamentary forces, and, accompanied by a fleet which sailed along the coast, he proceeded to carry out the invasion of the north.

Hitherto the Roundhead leader had been everywhere successful, and it was expected by his followers that he would subjugate the free government of Scotland as speedily and as effectively as he had put an end to the Royalist risings in the Sister Isle. On crossing the Scottish Border, however, he found himself matched for the first time by a general in all respects his equal.

David Leslie, created Lord Newark eleven years later by Charles, had served with high distinction in the German wars of Gustavus Adolphus. He had been major-general of the army under his namesake, Alexander Leslie, the old earl of Leven, which marched into England in 1644; and at Marston Moor in that year it was mainly the charge of the Scots cavalry under his command which, breaking and dispersing the right wing of the Royalists, brought about the issue of the battle. Last of all, it had been he who, in the misty September morning at Philiphaugh in 1645, surprised and overthrew the forces of the Royalists' most brilliant general, the Marquis of Montrose.

This was the leader who, in the cause of Charles II. and the Scottish Parliament, now matched his skill against the forces of the redoubted Cromwell. Following the example of the great model of Scottish generalship, Robert the Bruce, Leslie prepared the country before the invader by driving off all supplies, so that Cromwell, after crossing the Border, found the counties through which he had to pass stripped alike of men and of provisions. By this stratagem the English forces would have been reduced to the greatest straits without meeting an enemy or accomplishing any purpose whatever, had it not been that they were accompanied by the fleet, which furnished them with

necessaries. As it was, they were compelled to march close by the sea-coast, where their operations could most readily be watched and checkmated.

By slow and embarrassed progress of this sort the English army, towards the end of July, had come within measurable distance of Edinburgh. Here for the first time Cromwell found himself face to face with his opponent, and so skilfully had Leslie drawn up his defences, in the approaches between Leith and the crag of Arthur's Seat, that the Independent forces were brought entirely to a standstill. Several attempts to break through the Scottish lines had already been made without success, but on the evening of the first of August a more determined effort appeared to be in preparation.

News of this had been brought to the King as he sat late with a few of the closer intimates of his Court, but supposing that nothing would be attempted by the enemy before morning, Charles had delayed giving the signal for departure. It can be understood, however, that his movements were considerably accelerated when the actual sound of cannonading in the distance announced that the action had begun. In less time almost than it takes to write it, the small party descended to the courtyard, and throwing themselves upon

the backs of the steeds in attendance there, they were presently galloping off at full speed towards Leith. Before they had gone far, however, the firing ceased, and just as they reached headquarters the King was met by an aide-de-camp of General Leslie, sent to inform him and the members of the Committee of Estates that the English attack had been beaten off with some loss by a detachment of Scottish cavalry.

As the royal party galloped up, the news that the King had arrived flew right and left; there was a hurried movement of lights, followed by a series of gruff commands, and the regular tramp of the guard as it turned out gave significant indication that the discipline of Gustavus Adolphus had not been forgotten by the general of the Scottish forces. Charles was met on the steps of the headquarters by Leslie himself, still cased in full armor as he had ridden in from directing the movements of his troops.

"We are too late, I hear," cried Charles, springing to the ground, "to do more than congratulate General Leslie on a fresh success."

Leslie bowed. "Your majesty," he said, as he led the way into the house, "will forgive our want of preparation; a royal visit at this hour was altogether unexpected."

"But not altogether unwelcome, I trust," said

the King with a laugh, though at the same time glancing shrewdly at his interlocutor.

"On the contrary," replied Leslie, more politic in address than his predecessor Leven, the blunt old soldier of fortune, might have been, "the sword of King Charles must be of the first honor and advantage to any cause, especially as your Majesty is too good a soldier to forget that there can be but one captain in the field."

There was not a moment's pause before Charles answered, but in that instant he had time to take the measure of the man with whom he had to deal.

"It were folly in the most experienced prince," he then replied deliberately, "to interfere in any way with the authority of the ablest general of the day." And turning to the cavaliers of his party who had followed him into the room, he added, "My lords, in the present undertaking we will act in no point independently of the instructions of General Leslie."

Having thus in two sentences allayed the apprehensions of the disciplinarian, and settled the line of action for reinforcements of his own immediate following, Charles took the general by the arm and drew him into a neighboring ante-chamber.

"I have given proof," he said, when they were

sufficiently alone, "of the importance which I attach to the free action of a commanding officer in the field. I am glad to be assured that General Leslie is equally averse to the interference of other authorities in the affairs of his army."

The bronze skin of the veteran visibly deepened in color under the keen gaze of the King. He answered firmly, however :

"Hitherto, my liege, there has been no such interference ; it is the duty of a general to see that his authority stands unquestioned."

"Yet I can foresee a difficulty," returned Charles, "if the soldiers recognize a second authority to whom they owe obedience. To be entirely frank I have been given to understand that the ministers of the Kirk in our Scots army are to be counted with as of greater influence than properly belongs to military chaplains."

"To return frankness for frankness," answered Leslie, looking steadily at the Prince, "your Majesty has hit on what may be the weakest point of our Scottish armor. In the regiments of Gustavus the chaplains kept to their prayers, and I would I could find a way to make our Scots ministers do the same. The deeds brought about by their urgings suit ill with a soldier's stomach."

Here Leslie paused. He was thinking darkly, doubtless, of such violation of the rules of war as

the slaughter of his prisoners after quarter given at Philiphaugh and at the taking of Colkitto's castle. These deeds of vindictive fury against the Royalists, however, seeing that the speaker had himself been a chief instrument in them, could not be named before the King. "But," he added, slowly, "a soldier must obey his paymasters; and your Majesty will forgive my reminding you that the army under my command has hitherto been much in the hands of the Church."

"Yet by your own saying, General," returned Charles, "there should be but one captain in the field. Methinks the leader of the Scottish army might hold a firmer hand. At present I understand that only such recruits are admitted to the ranks as will obey their ministers first and General Leslie afterwards. It is even said that the Assembly meditates measures for bringing the forces still further under its own control."

At this intimation of proposed interference with the affairs of his command, Leslie's eye darkened with anger and distrust, and a certain setting of firmness about his mouth betokened his feeling on the subject. These signs apparently gave satisfaction to the King, who, under an assumed air of careless frankness, was watching the face of the general keenly; and he added:

"Believe me, my brave Leslie, he who would

avoid the certain issue of working with a dangerous mine underfoot—he who would avoid seeing his ablest plans ruined at the moment of accomplishment—must resist the interference of such reverend meddlers, must accept the services of every soldier, Presbyterian or other, who brings an honorable sword to the camp, and must insist on the preachers keeping to their ghostly province.”

From the first the Covenanting general had been shrewd enough to perceive that Charles was by no means the inconsequent stripling which his youthful appearance might have led him to be believed. The tragic vicissitudes of his life, and the experiences of his exile in various Courts and countries, had given the Prince a knowledge of men and their motives which rendered him a definite force to be counted with in the circumstances of the time. If Leslie had before suspected this astuteness in Charles, he was now assured of it by the certainty with which the latter had hit upon the chief defect in the Presbyterian army, and the decision and energy with which he had urged its remedy. Accordingly it was with something more than the mere formal show of respect due to the sovereign that he answered.

“Your Majesty,” he said, “has not been slow to perceive what is perhaps the chief danger

threatening the Scottish arms. Needs must, however, that, for lack of better, we fight with the weapons at hand. Nevertheless I hope so to manage matters for your Majesty and the Estates that the point of the danger may be avoided. Meanwhile your Majesty's countenance and the forces of your Majesty's friends are a welcome accession to the Scottish strength."

At this Charles rose from his seat. A stronger expression of opinion and policy at the moment, he felt, was not to be expected from a general in Leslie's position, holding his commission from the Estates. He was fain, therefore, to be content for the time with the fact that he had secured the assurance of a friendly reception in camp to such adherents of the Royalist party as might volunteer their services. Further efforts to secure the personal royalty and support of the leader must be left until circumstances, such as the accession of any considerable number of Royalist troops, should place Leslie in a more independent position. With this change once accomplished—the army in great part composed of adherents of the royal house, and the devotion of its general assured—a Scottish victory would no longer be likely, as at present, merely to increase the power of Argyle's faction, and with it the embarrassment of the throne. In this anticipation he bade Leslie

a warm good-night, gratifying the martinet pride of the soldier with a compliment on the military discipline of the troops under his command. He then, in order to be at hand in case of further demonstrations by the enemy, accepted the hospitality of Lord Balmerino's house in Leith, which its owner placed at his disposal, and presently retired to rest.*

Little was he aware of the jealous influences which were already at work to defeat his designs, to involve him personally in the most delicate embarrassment of his life, and finally to work out the purposes of Heaven and the destinies of the royal house in an altogether unexpected way.

* Prevented by the vicinity of Cromwell's forces from residing in Holyrood, Charles took up his residence in the house of Lord Balmerino in Leith—a mansion still standing at the corner of Coatfield Lane, in the Kirkgate.—See paper on Holyrood, in *Chamber's Repository*, p. 26.

CHAPTER XIII.

“Thou shalt not yield to lord nor loun,
Nor yet shalt thou yield to me ;
But yield thee to the bracken bush
That grows upon yon lily lea.

“Battle of Otterbourne.”

AT an early hour of the morning the Scottish camp presented a sight which would be considered not a little remarkable in the cantonments of a modern army. Observance of religious ordinances has more than once formed an historic feature in the military array of Scotland. On the field of Bannockburn, before the battle, it is said that the Scottish ranks kneeled down in prayer as the venerable Abbot of Inchaffray walked through them barefooted, exhorting them to fight for their hearths and King, and the story lends a peculiar dignity to the picture of that barbaric scene. Doubtless it was the same instinct of religious reverence on the eve of great issues which influenced the Presbyterian forces opposing Cromwell; but the ill-advised zeal of the ministers to

whom the conduct of religious matters in the army then fell, carried the exercise of their functions beyond the bounds of expediency, and almost into the region of burlesque.

Thus it was that on the morning of which we write the camp resounded with the voices of preachers, who here and there held forth to congregations of the companies with a curious adaptation of scriptural instances to the issues of the hour. Not content with a short service of prayer and reading, such as might have been suitable to the circumstances, they insisted, upon the plea that the faithful must not be famished, on the delivery of long harangues which seriously delayed military duty.

In the opposite camp of the Independents, it is true, a similar proceeding might have been observed ; but it was with a difference. In the English case it was the officers who assumed the function of preachers, and they were therefore in no way inclined to let their ordinances interfere with the discipline of the army. In the Scottish ranks, on the contrary, the preachers were outsiders who were only too apt to insist on the prerogative of the sacred services, while the actual officers stood by, powerless for the time to enforce order. It may be understood, therefore, that it was not without a certain secret satisfac-

tion that most of the latter now heard the blast of bugles and the roll of drums from headquarters, which intimated a general call to stand to arms. The ministers would fain have kept their audiences about them for some time longer, and several of them made a determined effort to this end, assuring their hearers that the arm of the Lord would show itself strong to smite, though the carnal sword should remain in its scabbard. But the peremptory and reiterated commands of the captains, combined with a very natural apprehension that the enemy might be even then advancing to the attack, in which case it would possibly be as well to resort in the first instance to carnal measures of defence, proved too much for the ministerial exhortations; and it was with wrathful looks that the preachers saw their congregations melt away at the instance of what they were pleased to regard as mere earthly behests.

It can be believed that the irate feelings of these gentlemen were in no way diminished by the discovery, which was made presently, that the interruption to their discourses came from no immediate apprehension of battle, but from a purpose of much vainer sort.

The different regiments had barely been able to go through the various movements necessary for

taking up regular position, when a brilliant cavalcade of horsemen were seen far to the left coming rapidly along the lines, and word was passed from post to post that the King himself was about to review the troops. As the cavalcade drew near, the individuals composing it could be more distinctly made out. Charles himself rode first. Clad from crest to stirrup in a suit of burnished armor, which glanced and shone in the sun, he was mounted on a superb black charger, a parting gift from his cousin, the fiery Prince Rupert, which had been sent him from the Hague; and as he rode along the ranks, his gallant bearing, and the knowledge that he had himself come to share their dangers in the field, evoked among the troops an unbounded enthusiasm. The display of feeling was as unexpected as it was distasteful and alarming to the preachers, who had been too long accustomed to the sweets of power to view with equanimity the prospect of divided sway. The possibility of the young King's obtaining an ascendancy over the mind of the army seemed to them to threaten an immediate return to power of the moderate or "Malignant" party; and it was with jealous and angry eyes that they noted for subsequent inquisition such officers as made most conspicuous demonstrations of loyalty.

Meanwhile the latter—gentlemen, many of

them, who appreciated the King's countenance quite apart from political considerations—afforded him the best reception in their power, and almost everywhere he was saluted by them with the utmost ardor and respect. In the ranks, it is true, there appeared to be some difference of feeling. Among these were incorporated many of the old Presbyterian soldiers who had fought against Charles I. at Marston Moor, and who had seen the surrender of that monarch at Newcastle. To the minds of some of them the return to power of Charles's son held out a prospect of possible trouble; and such apprehensions were not set entirely at rest even by the sight of the two Scottish generals of these former occasions now riding in the company of the young King. Such men and others of the stricter Presbyterian persuasion therefore accorded but a grudging salute to the royal party as it passed, and, backed by the majority of the ministers, some of them might even have indulged in demonstrations of another sort but for the military discipline which Leslie's officers were still able to enforce.

As it was, Charles, as he rode along, with General Leslie a length behind, and the older Presbyterian general, the Earl of Leven,* and

* The elder Leslie served as a volunteer in this campaign.

other officers and noblemen in his train, felt himself, curiously, to be the object at once of devotion and remonstrance. While most of the officers and many of the troops appeared eager to do him all the honor in their power, and here and there the ranks even burst into a cheer as he passed, it did not escape his observation that there was a difference of feeling in the camp, and that the preachers especially showed anything but a disposition to welcome his appearance. After he had moved to some distance, several of the latter could be heard endeavoring to raise their voices in disapproval of the whole proceeding, which they were not slow to term a bowing of the knee in the high places of Baal; and between these orators, and the more loyally disposed officers who strove to enforce order and discipline, there rose disputes in which the private soldiers were drawn to take sides. This turn of affairs, the natural result of an allegiance divided between the civil and religious authority in the State, was itself sufficiently uncomfortable and alarming; but the climax of the scene was reached when Charles had all but completed his round of the forces.

It will be remembered that the messenger sent by General Leslie on the previous night to advise the King and the committee in Edinburgh of the

issue of the evening's engagement, was met by Charles not far from headquarters. Along with his original message, therefore, the aide-de-camp naturally carried with him to town, news of the King's arrival in camp. This intimation was of a sort which could not be regarded with composure by the Presbyterian authorities, presenting to them, as it did, a prospect of royal ascendancy in the army, a quarter where the King would be immediately removed out of their power. With jealous haste, therefore, a council was called, and as the result of its deliberations, a committee was appointed to proceed with the first light of morning to the camp above Leith, there to use measures not only for the removal of Charles to a secure distance, but for the purging from the ranks of the army itself of all such as appeared too loyally disposed towards his Majesty.* This committee, however, owing to the delays to which committees are notoriously prone, had

* "The committee of Parliament for purging the army did meet this 2, 3, and 5 days of August. They acted nothing against the enemy, but purged out of the army above 80 commanders. The ministers in all places preached incessantly for this purging, showing, if that committee did not proceed, the consequences that would follow would certainly prove lamentable and destructive, and would undoubtedly multiply God's judgments upon the land and army."—*Balfour's Annals*, vol. iv. p. 89.

not set out quite so early as was intended. Accordingly it was when the King, having made nearly all his round of inspection, was again approaching headquarters, that he found himself confronted by the envoys.

A curious appearance the latter presented as they drew near. Three of them were clergymen, and the remaining two members of the Convention of Estates. Along with the habitual austerity of their countenances could be detected a certain chagrin at the discovery that they came too late to prevent the King's appearance before the troops, and the possible formation of an attachment to his person among the soldiery. In the aspect of the ministers, moreover, an outward assumption of boldness did not altogether conceal some trepidation which they felt on thus suddenly finding themselves in the royal presence upon what was at least a delicate, and might prove to be a dangerous, errand.

Any hesitation, however, which they may have felt was promptly brought to decision by Charles. Upon catching sight of the party he at once guessed something of their mission, and his eye darkened with displeasure and scorn. Nevertheless, these feelings were in no way apparent when he addressed the leader of the company.

"My Lord of Lorne," he said, "it is a happy

incident which gives us the advantage of your presence thus early in camp, though your following is hardly such as those of your name have been accustomed to lead to battle. I trust it is no sinister news which brings you and these gentlemen to the field."

"The Lords of Lorne, my liege," returned the individual addressed, with something of heat flushing momentarily across his grave countenance, "can still lead as weighty a following as of old to the field should the safety of Scotland and the Covenant demand it. Meanwhile I am sent hither with these gentlemen by commission of the Estates to urge becoming means of safety for your royal person."

"Methinks, my Lord," returned the King, with sufficient dignity, "the person of Charles Stuart is likely to find no safer place of keeping in Scotland at present than among the swords of these gallant officers and of our brave soldiers here in camp."

As he spoke these words the Prince glanced lightly in Leslie's direction, but he might have been made sufficiently aware of that general's approbation of his sentiment by the quick look of alarm on the faces of one or two of the committee.

"We will ride forward, however," he added,

“and if you, my lord, have any communication to make, it will be most fitly received and considered within doors.”

Saying this, he gave the rein to his steed, and led the way to the house which was for the time his residence in Leith. Upon arrival there he requested the attendance of Leslie and a few others of his own following, and with the five envoys from Edinburgh betook himself to a private morning-room of the mansion.

“We will take your commission here,” he said, when, in consideration for the old Earl of Leven, who had ridden out in complete armor, he had desired them be seated.

“We are instructed by the Committee of Estates,” answered Lord Lorne, laying the parchment minute containing his commission on the table, “to convey their humble advice that, considering the dangers imminent to the State from harm befalling your royal person, your Majesty shall retire from the immediate field of war, and be conveyed to such greater security as is afforded by Sterling or Dunfermline.”

The leaders of the Covenanting party in Parliament had been prompt as well as bold in forming this request—so prompt indeed that their message came upon the King before he had had

time to assure himself of any but the most doubtful influence in the camp. With a stronger backing in the army, such as could hardly have failed to accrue to him had he been suffered to remain for any length of time among the soldiers themselves, he might have been able to refuse the request of the committee point-blank, and presently even to turn the tables upon them. For such a possibility, however, no time had been allowed; Charles was taken at a disadvantage. Nevertheless, hemmed into a corner as he was, he made shift to find some resource.

“Our Lords of Parliament,” he said, “we are assured, have the royal interest at heart, and we thank them sincerely for their solicitude. We are, however, by no means convinced of hurt to the State resulting from our appearance in the field, and I would have you remind my lords that it is a sovereign’s sacred duty to share the dangers of his subjects.”

By thus putting off the immediate request of the committee it was the King’s intention to gain time. Such a contingency, however, had been foreseen and provided for.

“My lords of the Convention,” returned Lorne, “are so convinced of the impossibility of carrying out successfully the defence of the kingdom and Covenant in case of harm befalling your Majesty,

that they instructed their committee here present to say further that, unless your Highness was pleased to retire forthwith to such place of greater safety as they have recommended, they would no longer feel themselves able to continue the present resistance to the enemy."

Charles was about to reply more hotly to what must have appeared to him, to say the least, a somewhat presumptuous style of address, when an incident happened which gave another direction to the point at issue.

Before the last speech of Lord Lorne, General Leslie had been hastily summoned from the room. He now returned and begged a moment's private interview with the King.

Strange as the request was, to be preferred while the Sovereign was giving audience in such circumstances, yet so anxious was the expression of Leslie's face, and so pressing were the terms in which he made his demand, that Charles at once rose, and excusing himself to the envoys for the moment, passed into an adjoining chamber.

"Well, General," he said, when they were alone, "the matter must surely be of moment for which you summon me thus urgently from audience?"

"My liege," answered Leslie, "I have just re-

ceived intelligence that the English troops are in motion, and making as if to outflank our defences and attack the city from the south."

"Any movement is a relief in the circumstances," exclaimed Charles, "and I have no doubt our resources can be made to cope with the emergency. You have already, I suppose, given the order for counter-movements?"

"Alas!" returned the outspoken soldier, with some perturbation, "it is just there the difficulty lies. A part of the forces appear to have got wind of the request from the Estates to your Majesty, and refuse to move unless—unless that request be agreed to."

The King's eyes flashed with anger as he turned upon the general.

"In these circumstances, General Leslie," he said, "you are aware of the duty of a commander. The action of these men in mutiny is the field."

By this time the drums of the English could be heard in the distance as they crossed to windward on the movement south, and beads of anxiety began to show themselves on the forehead of the general as he replied.

"My liege," he said, "I am powerless at the very moment when I would be strong. The malcontents are a majority of the troops, while

a very carrion crow of the Kirk, one Nevoy, has arrived from Edinburgh in the camp, and flies everywhere preaching that God is with the mutineers."

"To be brief," said Charles, slowly and somewhat bitterly, "these men will not fight unless I retire, and you would advise me to this?"

"My liege," answered the stout soldier, reddening with shame at the position in which he found himself, "I but tell you the condition of affairs. So far am I from approving it, that I will go further: I hold a commission from the Estates, but I will say this, Here is my sword; if your Majesty bid me, I will ride out with those who will follow me, and do my best effort for your Highness, if it be my last."

It was the King's turn now to show warmth of feeling.

"My good general," he said, "it were impossible to doubt your honesty. The day may come when I can reward that quality to more effect.* Meanwhile circumstances prove too strong for us, and I must stoop for the nonce to the occasion."

Returning, with this, to the chamber of audience, Charles explained to the envoys that matters had been so laid before him by General

* It has been already stated that David Leslie was created Lord Newark by Charles at the Restoration eleven years later.

Leslie that he was now persuaded of the wisdom in the recommendation of the Estates. He was, therefore, willing to return from the camp at once.

Lord Lorne gravely and in a few words expressed his satisfaction with the King's decision, and so promptly was that decision carried into effect that within half an hour the royal party was on its way eastwards, making for Queensferry and the ancient city of Dunfermline.*

* "His Majesty stayed at Leith until Friday, the 2d of August, 1650, and then, sore against his own mind, he was moved by his counsel and the general persons of the army to retire himself to Dunfermline."—*Balfour's Annals*, vol. iv. p. 86.

CHAPTER XIV.

“He was twisting of collars his dogs to hold,
And combing the mane of his courser bold.”

Old Ballad.

IT must have been with somewhat ominous feelings that Charles now took up his residence in the palace of the ancient Abbey of Dunfermline. Close by, in the still stately, though ruined pile, once a Benedictine monastery, lay the ashes of his ancestors from Malcolm Canmore to Robert III. Not one of these, not even the Bruce himself, with all his hazards, had ever been brought to so humiliating a pass as he who now felt himself monarch in little else than name. It seemed, indeed, as if the royal line, derived through the veins of kings whose deeds had made the history of Scotland for six centuries, were about to be eclipsed amid the party bickerings and ambitions of Independent and Presbyterian kirkmen. The fortunes of Charles now stood between the horns of a strange dilemma, either of whose alternatives appeared entirely

disastrous. If, on the one hand, the forces of the Scottish Presbyterians should prove successful in the military game now being played, the King must inevitably find himself more than ever under the compulsion of Argyle and the narrow theologistic party. If, on the other hand, the fortune of war should give victory to Cromwell and his sectaries, not even the name of king would be left to the representative of the royal house. Of these two alternatives it were difficult to say which was likely to prove the worse. Meanwhile, since no taking of thought appeared likely to help him in the juncture in which he found himself, and since he was denied a part in the greater game of war then being played, Charles turned for healthy occupation to such pleasures of the chase as were to be had in the neighborhood of the ancient royal city of Dunfermline. There might be those who suspected that under his debonair exterior at that time the young King was engaged in intrigues for the assertion of the royal power. His later assumption of arms on his own account, indeed, would sufficiently countenance such a presumption. But if this were so, Charles took the greatest care to allow small room for these suspicions. He surmised well that the surest means of securing liberty to achieve his purposes was to appear en-

tirely occupied with more frivolous matters. Accordingly to outward appearance he was no more than the ardent sportsman, the gayest and most daring leader of the chase.

Curiously enough, it was exactly that party in the nation which had jealously prevented the Prince's participation in serious affairs which now showed itself eager to condemn his lighter pursuits. It is in this carping temper that his reception of a certain weighty deputation from the Commission of Assembly has been chronicled by the historians of the Covenanting party.

It was still the early morning of a day towards the middle of August, when the mingling of bright sunshine and cool cloud-shadows gave promise of perfect weather for their sport, that the royal party were about to set out. A page was holding his horse at the foot of the broad steps before the palace, and Charles was in the act of putting his foot in the stirrup, when word was brought to him that a cavalcade of consequence was approaching from Queensferry, and was even then making its way under the abbey walls.

There was a pause of a few moments, the royal party waiting in ill-concealed expectation of momentous news, before the new arrivals came within sight. These dismounted at the outer gateway of the palace, leaving the horses in

charge of their attendants, and as they came slowly across the intervening ground Charles advanced a step to meet them.

"My Lord of Lorne," he said, "and you, my Lords of Lothian and Eglinton, I am pleased to see you, though you are no more than in time. Another minute and we should have been beyond recall. We shall not be sorry, however, if the delay and some refreshment add you to the numbers of the chase."

"We are charged," gravely answered the first nobleman addressed, "with papers of momentous import which we would crave to submit without delay for your Majesty's approval."

"Saving that," added Lord Lothian, hastening to atone for his companion's omission of acknowledgment for the courtesy of the King—"saving that, and bating a trifle of stiffness that bids me look twice nowadays at ditch or dyke ere I cross it, I for one would have been most pleased to accept the invitation of your Majesty."

"Our field is so much the poorer by what our councils have gained, my lord," answered Charles, graciously, as he led the way within.

While the King remained closeted with his guests indoors, his quondam companions of the morning were left outside to speculate on the

urgency of the business which was detaining him.

In somewhat less than half an hour he returned, and all there present noticed a look of added anxiety on his face, as he stood for a moment adjusting the hawk glove on his wrist. In another moment, however, with a few words of excuse for the necessary delay, he had mounted his steed and was leading the cavalcade towards that part of the country in which sport was most likely to be found.

The royal party was a more brilliant one than might have been expected in the somewhat constrained circumstances of the Court at the time. Resisting hitherto all the various kinds of pressure which had been brought to bear upon him to order the exile of such nobles as were obnoxious to the Presbyterian faction, Charles, having learned a sad enough lesson from the fate of the Great Marquis of Montrose, still stood by his friends; and such peers as Hamilton, Lauderdale, and Buckingham still remained about his person and shared his sports and councils. These, notwithstanding their crippled condition as owners of estates burdened with the forfeits and fines of political opponents, were yet able to make a brave enough show as they rode out in the company of the King. Usually Charles himself was

the soul as he was the leader of the party—the sun from whom the surrounding planets took their light; and while fairly distributing the favors of the royal attention to those around him, none knew better when to apply the spur and when the curb to the prancings of wit and persiflage which made time fly among the cavalier gallants. To-day, however, it did not escape the notice of those about his person best able to judge, that under the light shafts of raillery and merry humor which he was pleased to throw off, there appeared occasionally a certain air of pre-occupation which boded serious business on hand.

Nor were these surmises without foundation. The party had scattered at intervals in a line across the country for the purposes of their sport, Charles and his more immediate attendants being guided in the direction in which quarry was most likely to be found; and the royal falcons had cast off once or twice with tolerable success, when matters were so managed by the King that for a few minutes he was left out of earshot of the rest of his followers in the company of Montrose.

During the last few chapters there has been no occasion to mention the proceedings of the young chief of the Grahams. He himself, in-

deed, since he joined the circle of the Court, had done little but chafe at an enforced inaction. With an eye of ill-concealed displeasure he had watched the assumptions and encroachments of the clerical party, while the King, to all outward appearance, made no determined effort to counteract that party's influence. Once or twice Graham had ventured to approach the subject of the political situation with Charles himself, but these approaches were uniformly turned aside with a lightness that seemed scarce in keeping with the gravity of the question at issue. It may readily be understood that it was no part of the King's plan to reveal the agency and policy with which he wrought even to his most trusty friends. The air of gayety, however, with which the Prince sought to conceal his real efforts was regarded by Montrose, as by many others at the time, in the light of a mere ill-considered levity; and the young nobleman waited with the utmost impatience for indications of some serious movement on the part of Charles.

Nor had the latter, when he rallied his follower upon the charge of playing the love-sick swain, guessed how nearly he struck at the truth. For Montrose could not but feel how closely the success of his own love-suit, as well as the reinstatement of his family fortunes, was bound up with

the political movements of the hour. Should the covenanting party continue to increase in power nothing appeared more certain to the eyes of the desponding lover than that the daughter of Argyle must be further and further removed from his reach. If, on the other hand, the party of the King should by any means obtain an ascendancy, affairs from the lover's point of view could not but wear a more hopeful aspect. It will be seen, therefore, that from personal as well as patriotic motives Montrose was likely to await with eagerness any sign of royal activity. In this respect he now to all appearance was about to be gratified, for it was with a countenance of firmness and in a tone of purpose that the King addressed him.

Aware that many eyes were upon them, and that what he had to say had better be said quickly, Charles wasted no words in approaching his purpose.

"Montrose," he said, "it is not yet many weeks since the chief of the Grahams made his sovereign a gallant offer."

The young nobleman, thus suddenly approached at last on a serious topic, glanced up quickly with a look of the keenest expectation.

"Your Majesty's decision on that subject," he replied, "has not ceased to cause me regret."

"At the time," returned Charles, "prudence urged me to make trial first of more pacific measures. It was a duty owed to the country, which of late has tasted more than enough of war. Since then I have had reason to regret my decision, and this morning——" He paused, and a slight flush tinged his cheek as at the recollection of some insult. "In short," he resumed next moment, "I confess myself to-day to be thinking seriously of your counsel."

"Your Majesty," answered Montrose, with suppressed ardor, "has but to say the word, and once again I promise that in two days' time there will be as brave an army at the service of the throne as ever marched out of the north."

Charles looked thoughtfully at his adviser, and paused a moment before replying. Then, as if he had arrived at a decision, he answered—

"First or last it must come to the sword-point, and the sooner perhaps the better. The country must be ruled either by the pulpit or by the throne, and methinks the Crown has suffered slighting enough already. Do you, my Lord of Montrose, stand prepared with horses during the council this afternoon. The royal cause may need swift riding, and Charles Stuart himself perforce may carry the fiery cross into the country of the Graham."

At this point one or two other members of the royal party approached, and Montrose's expressions of devotion and enthusiasm were cut short. The King allowed the hunt to proceed for some little time afterwards, in order to prevent the drawing of any politic conclusions from the moment's earnest conversation; then, upon a pretext of the scarcity of quarry, he gave the signal for return to the palace.

CHAPTER XV.

"It's gin ye wad be leman o' mine,
Lay aside the St. John's-wort and the vervain."

Ballad Fragment.

UPON leaving the palace in the morning Charles had given instructions for the summoning of a meeting of the Privy Council, or at least of such members of it as were at the time within reach. From this intimation it was gathered that some proceeding of the last importance was under consideration. Hitherto the King had avoided calling together his "right trusty councillors," perhaps from a knowledge that in the existing condition of affairs the party whose councils were least to be desired was the party likely to be best represented at the board. The present summons, therefore, was taken to augur some unusual crisis, and it was with an air of grave expectation that the several peers invited prepared to attend.

Odd as the fact may seem to modern ideas of elegance, Charles received his councillors in the

royal bed-chamber. It was an apartment of some size, hung with rich and heavy tapestry, and furnished yet in sumptuous style with the tall carved chairs, heavy tables of dark bees-waxed mahogany, and vast canopied bed, with which it had been provided upon the occasion of the last state visit of Charles I.

Differing in that respect from his royal father, the young King was inclined to dispense with formal preparations of ceremony, when these interfered with his natural impatience to accomplish a purpose in hand. Thus it came about that on the present occasion he received his councillors still dressed as he had ridden out hawking in the morning. Hardly, indeed, had he allowed himself to take the slight refreshment of a cup of wine when, hearing that certain of the expected noblemen were already in attendance in the ante-chamber, he gave orders to have them admitted.

The first to enter the royal presence were Lord Lothian and Lord Lorne, the latter still austere and formal as he had appeared in the earlier morning, and carrying in his hand the same ominous roll of parchment. These two had but paid their greetings to the King and been provided with seats by the gentleman-usher when the Marquis of Argyle was announced. He came

in with a look of eagerness, apparently expecting to find the King still alone; and when he perceived that the chance of forestalling the Privy Council by a private interview was lost, the first quick look of his face was somewhat damped. It was with an air of the most suave self-possession, however, that he bowed to Charles; and none but he towards whom it was directed saw the quick look of hate which, in the act, he darted sidewise towards his son, Lord Lorne. The latter, unaware how his promptitude in arrival had frustrated his father's carefully-laid plans of ambition, returned the look with one of cold indifference. Lords Tweeddale, Eglinton, and others of the royal advisers now arrived in rapid succession, having been made immediately aware of the King's return; and presently each seat was occupied at the central table of the apartment, at whose head sat Charles himself.

The face of the King wore a certain air of abstraction, together with an unwonted expression of firmness, as he gazed slowly from one to another of the strongly-marked countenances before him; and each one present could not but feel that, whether the actual control of affairs were in the hands of the young monarch or not, there was in his character a faculty of insight into the motives of men which must render him a

formidable factor in State business, if only the conclusions at which he might arrive were backed up by sufficient tenacity of purpose.

Alas! here lay the whole weakness of Charles. Again and again, throughout his history, he formed resolutions which, if consistently enforced, could not have failed to exert a strong moderating influence on the bitter-party politics of his day. From first to last, however, there were about him men who, with narrower intelligence perhaps, possessed the sleuth-hound zeal and perseverance of enthusiasts. Added to this, it must be confessed that the circumstances of the time—the waves of popular opinion dashing madly to and fro between the mediæval ideas of absolute monarchy and the newer doctrines of a republican commonwealth, before settling into the later mean of constitutional government—immensely increased the difficulty of keeping a steady hand on the rudder of the State. At any rate, it is to be noticed that continually, after holding out with something approaching heroism till his point was all but won, the King's firmness of resolve would give way before a final combination of circumstances, and, resigning himself to what appeared the inevitable, he allowed himself to drift with the current. In this way a gradual effect was produced upon his character, which

became more noticeable in later years. So often had his strongest and best intentions been baffled by events that, in these later years, he came to adopt the epicurean philosophy of life for which he has been so often blamed, and, despairing of any success in stemming the tide of circumstance, to devote himself more and more to the pleasures of the hour. It was then he earned the title of the Merry Monarch.

At the period of which we write, however, he still possessed the optimism and consequent purposefulness of youth, so that Argyle himself, the master-spirit of Scotland at the time, felt by no means altogether sure of his ends.

“My lords,” said Charles, when the first formalities were over, “we have this morning received an address from our Committee of Estates upon which we desire to have the weight of your opinion; and since it may be best without waste of time to come to the point of the matter, I would ask my Lord of Lorne to make known the contents of his communication.”

Summoned thus by name, the nobleman referred to took up the parchment before him, unrolled it with the utmost gravity, and with no greater introduction than a somewhat stately reverence to the young King, proceeded to read forth its contents. These it is needless to recapitulate here.

They are to be found in every history of the time. It is enough to say that the Presbyterian leaders of the Scottish Parliament, averring that they found their position attacked, not only by the forces, but by the logic of the English Independent general, took the opportunity of insisting that their chief weakness lay in the alleged "Malignancy" of the King. The loyalty of the people, as well as the favor of Heaven, they declared, were now only to be retained by the express statement of Charles that he adhered to the Articles of the Covenant, and that "casting himself and his interests upon God, he was willing to follow the advice of his Parliament in matters civil, and the General Assembly or their commissioners in matters ecclesiastical."

Had the request stopped here all might have gone smoothly enough, and Charles, yielding to the exigencies of the situation, might have appended such a qualified consent to the demand as would have satisfied most of the Presbyterian following, and sufficiently served the immediate purposes in view, without seriously compromising himself or the royal prerogatives. But the extreme section of the party in power had used the urgent circumstances of the time as an occasion for demanding from the King an expression of regret for what they were pleased to term the

contumacy of his father, the idolatry of his mother, and his own former misconduct while in a graceless state. They went further still than this, and proceeded even to doubt the royal honor. Charles was asked to declare "that he entered into the Covenant-oath without any sinister intentions or crooked design for attaining his own ends, but, so far as human weakness would permit, in the truth and sincerity of his heart." This document, a sufficiently strange one to be set before a king for signature, ended with a piece of curious casuistry. The prayer was put into his mouth "that, whatever had been his former guiltiness before God, and the bad success that those had who owned his affairs while he stood in opposition to the work of God, yet, the state of the question being now altered, and he having obtained mercy to be upon God's side, and to prefer God's interest to his own, the Lord would be gracious and countenance His own cause, in the hands of weak, sinful instruments, against all enemies whatsoever."

Charles sat and listened until this peculiar document had been read to an end, his feelings betrayed only by the flush which came and went upon his face at the more presumptuous passages, and the indignant flash of the eyes as he glanced at the reader; but there was an omin-

ous curl on his lip as Lord Lorne finished the perusal.

"This," he asked, looking straight at the latter, "is the declaration to which the Estates of Scotland ask the signature of their Prince?"

"I have read to the best of my poor ability," said Lorne, as if it were the most ordinary communication in the world, though it may be doubted if he were quite so unconscious of the insulting implications of the document as he chose to appear. "We of the Committee entrusted with its submission to your Majesty," he added, "have further to urge that it will be at peril of danger befalling both the State and the throne if the royal signature be withheld."

"And you, my lords of the Privy Council," said Charles, still containing himself, as he glanced at one after another of the politic faces before him, "I would fain have the advantage of your opinion upon this request."

For a minute, however, no one spoke. It required no very shrewd eye to perceive the opinion of the matter held by Charles himself, and between the desire to avoid encountering the explosion of royal feeling which seemed imminent, and the wish to remain on good terms with the leaders of the all-powerful Covenanting party, each hesitated to be the first to express himself.

Of all there, without a doubt the coolest and most calculating head was that of the Marquis of Argyle. At this point, with the wary policy natural to his character, he seemed to wait until some one else should speak. Silence on his own part could entail no personal compromise, while any expression on the part of another present might afford a clue to the disposition of the speaker which could be turned to future account in the intricate party politics of the day. As no one, however, ventured either to indicate approval or disapproval of the declaration demanded from the King, Argyle himself at last suggested a proceeding which committed him neither to one side nor to the other.

"In a matter of so weighty tenor and import," he said slowly, "I would venture my counsel to your Majesty to defer replying until there has been due time allowed for consideration."

In this remark he was immediately followed by Lord Lorne with more heat than that nobleman usually allowed to appear in his manner. For it was notorious that Argyle's historic disagreement with his own father was more than balanced by the later antagonism of his son.

"The Marquis of Argyle forgets," exclaimed the latter, "the urgency of the matters momentarily at issue, an urgency which demands the

instant assurance of the royal disposition. Otherwise——”

It would be curious to conjecture what fresh alternative of Covenanting intentions the speaker was about to add. At this point he was interrupted by Charles himself in a voice cold and biting as steel.

“My Lord of Lorne,” said the King, “is a zealous advocate of the mission with which he has been entrusted. We would remind him, nevertheless, that zeal may have its limits. I would have you reflect, my lord, that your embassy has already carried you further than has been ventured with impunity by a subject in Scotland before. It is an enterprise that in another day had hardly been forgiven even to so great a subject as the Lord of Lorne.”

Here Charles paused, but it was only to proceed somewhat bitterly—

“The King of Scots but lately might have looked to see every sword leap from its scabbard at so bold an approach, yet here no tongue has spoken. I accept the sign. Rest sure, however, that though the peers of Scotland forget the respect due to the throne, there is yet one who while he lives will not see the royal honor basely trodden in the mire. In one thing I agree with you, my lord. Delay here were of no avail.

Your answer is ready. To sign that parchment were to forfeit alike the kingly title and the filial name. Go back, my lord, to those who sent you, and assure them that, while in no respect will Charles Stuart forget the duty he owes to his people, in no respect can he forget the duty owed to a father's memory by a son."

Sweeping a haughty glance round the circle of peers before him, the young King added—

"I thank you, my lords, for your attendance. Our meeting is over."

And, rising to his feet, he broke up the council.

Slowly the room emptied, Charles according more or less acknowledgment to the greetings with which the various members of his council bowed themselves out.

Presently all had gone except the Marquis of Argyle. That experienced diplomatist had so managed matters that he should be last to leave the chamber, and, using the privilege of his position to remain behind, he now approached the King.

Charles had thrown himself back in his chair, and was gloomily regarding the large signet ring which he twisted to and fro on his finger. He looked up at Argyle's approach.

"You have matter of importance to communicate, my lord marquis?"

"I have a despatch which I would fain have placed in your Majesty's hands before this meeting," answered Argyle, "had not my zealous Lorne found an entrance before me."

"Since it could not have altered the answer to yonder demand," returned Charles, "your news may not have lessened in value by the delay."

"Alas!" answered Argyle, "my tidings is as that of the messengers who came to Job."

"I scarce understand, my lord," said Charles, somewhat petulantly. "Have our arms suffered some reverse?"

"God forbid!" said Argyle, with some haste. Then he added more slowly: "The Commission of Assembly have ventured upon so serious a measure as to pass an Act providing for your Majesty's refusal to sign this declaration. A copy has been brought to me express by a trusty messenger."

Here he took a paper from his pocket and handed it to the King. The latter glanced over it, and a frown darkened his brow as he mastered the contents. These amounted to nothing short of a throwing off of the royal allegiance. In sufficiently strong language the framers intimated their intention to "support the King no longer than he supported the cause of God," declaring that "they espoused no Malignant quarrel or

party, nor acknowledged the King nor his interest otherwise than in subordination to God."

"Methinks," said Charles, as he handed back the document, "I am fated to listen to more treason to-day than ever was offered to a king's ears before."

"Something must be done to meet this," answered Argyle, avoiding the King's remark, which perhaps struck him as true enough. "If the Kirk withdraw its sanction from the war, while the army of the English sectaries still lies before Edinburgh, the act means ruin."

"Let it come," said the King, wearily; "I am sick enough of this barren dignity, this heaping of insult upon insult. Let it end, and perhaps the sooner the better."

"Matters are not yet so far gone but that the foot of the King may be turned aside from the pit. I would have your Majesty's assent to a still further effort."

"It seems to me, my Lord of Argyle," returned Charles, "that these efforts of yours have until now borne but indifferent fruit."

"I would crave your patience but a little longer," answered the diplomatist quietly, and rising to an occasion in which the prize to be gained was not greater than the craft needed for securing it, he proceeded to reawaken the royal

hopes. "Were a decided victory but vouchsafed to our arms," he said, "and the English troops removed, the situation would be in our own hands, and I then should be able to prove in full my earnestness to serve your Majesty."

"Yet," replied the King, "this cannot be achieved unless I consent to sign yonder dishonoring declaration." Here he frowned indignantly. "Speak to me no more of it."

"If my liege would bear with me I would suggest another way whereby the end might be gained without encroachment upon your Majesty's proper honor."

"And that is?"

Argyle paused but a moment, then in a firm voice made straight towards his deeply-cherished purpose.

"Your Majesty will believe me," he said, "that it is only the unwonted situation of affairs that urges me to put forth so delicate an expedient. You are aware that it is the lack of assurance regarding your Majesty's approval of the doctrines of the Covenant which forms the chief stumbling-block at the moment. Were your Majesty, however, to give some undeniable assurance of respect for the principles of the Presbyterian party, that stumbling-block would be removed. This, I would humbly submit, might

best be done by marrying into some Scottish family of quality and influence attached beyond question to the Presbyterian interest."

The young King's eyes at this suggestion were riveted upon the face of his adviser with a gaze which Argyle, fully prepared for it, met without wavering.

"The politician," said Charles," who makes such a proposition will doubtless be able to suggest a suitable lady."

"Your Majesty," returned the marquis steadily, "could give no firmer assurance to the country than by a marriage with the daughter of Argyle." *

Charles sprang from his chair, and for a full minute paced rapidly up and down the chamber. It was a thrilling as well as a daring proposition which had been made to him. The embarrass-

* "It is mentioned by Lord Dartmouth, in his MS. notes on Burnet, quoted in Rose's observations on Fox (p. 176) that on his arrival Argyle informed his Majesty that he could not serve him as he desired unless he gave some undeniable proof of a fixed resolution to support the Presbyterian party, which he thought would be best done by marrying into some family of quality and influence attached to that interest, and thought his own daughter would be the properest match for him. . . . Certain it is that the Presbyterian party, at the head of which was Argyle, was then the strongest, and it is likely that, with a sincere desire to serve his Majesty, the ambition of that

ments of the hour had all at once assumed a clear and lurid meaning. Argyle, playing for a high stake at a subtle and dangerous game, was for the moment master of the situation. He had waited to make his final proposition till the alternatives were acquiescence or ruin. The King perceived this at a glance, and in a few seconds had made up his mind how he should act.

Turning to the marquis, who was waiting his answer in silence, and grasping him by the hand, Charles looked straight into the inscrutable cross-eyes, and said briefly—

“My lord, I take you at your word.”

“In that case,” Argyle hastened to reply, “the way is clear. Upon this announcement the Estates will be satisfied with a modified declaration, which your Majesty may sign without filial scruple,* and, to assure even the most grave

nobleman might have led him to entertain such a design, with a view of advancing both his Majesty's interests and his own, as well as the cause of the Presbyterian religion, while the report that the King was to marry his daughter was prevalent at the time.”—“*The Scottish Nation*,” art. *Archibald Campbell*.

“This singular piece of secret history is most circumstantially related by old Kirkton, a contemporary, having the best means of information, honest and unsophisticated, himself a Covenanter, and candid and respectful to the memory of the great marquis.”—*Dodd's “Struggles of the Covenanters,”* p. 69.

* For purposes of brevity a slight liberty is here taken in running several different occurrences together. In reality the

doubters of the Kirk, the marriage can be arranged for an early day."

"But," cried Charles, a little aghast at the threatened hastening of the nuptial tie, "I do not yet know the Lady Anne."

"It is a shortcoming soon remedied in a royal wooer," returned Argyle, composedly. "Anne and her mother lie but a morning's ride hence, at Perth."

Half an hour later, Montrose, waiting with grooms and horses, according to agreement, close by the postern gate of the palace, perceived with intense delight the King coming to keep his tryst. The face of the latter wore an air of peculiar abstraction, and he exchanged little more than a casual greeting with his adherent as he got into the saddle.

After assisting Charles to mount, Montrose ventured to mention his proposed route.

"By Stirling to Fintry and Killearn, I think?" he said.

repugnant declaration was first submitted for the King's signature at Dunfermline on the 9th of August, the meeting of Privy Council was held on the 13th, and the modified declaration was finally signed on the 16th. "After much disputation some alterations in words were accorded on, it being written over in mundo, his Majesty signed the same on Friday, the 16th day of August, about 3 in the afternoon, and immediately thereafter took horse for Perth."—*Balfour's Annals*, vol. iv.

"Not at present," said Charles, with a curious smile. "We will take the road by Kinross and the Bridge of Earn to the city of Perth instead."

CHAPTER XVI.

“ O sleep ye, wake ye, Lillie-Flower ?

The red sun's on the rain ;

Ye're bidden come to Sillerwood,

But I doubt ye'll ne'er win hame.”

Jellon Grame.

THE object of Charles in assenting so readily to the matrimonial proposition of Argyle, and in taking horse so soon afterwards for the fair city of St. Johnston, may readily be conjectured. At the moment, MacCallum More, however skilfully he might veil the fact for purposes of his own, was all but absolute master of the situation in Scotland. It was therefore essential that at all hazards he should be attached to the royal cause. At a glance Charles perceived that the alliance with his daughter was proposed upon no sudden impulse, and that to thwart Argyle on this point would be not only to alienate his interest, but to excite his apprehensions. Were the Presbyterian leader once made conscious of having presumed too far in so delicate a matter, he was

likely to be in no haste to see his Prince installed in an independent position. Perhaps, however, a less diplomatic and more personal reason contributed somewhat towards the assent of Charles. Naturally of a somewhat pleasure-loving disposition, it may be understood that the grave and sombre life which, under surveillance of the divines of the Kirk, he had been constrained to lead since coming to Scotland, had not been one altogether suited to his taste. The prospect therefore of excitement, however hazardous, which the proposition held out, could not but be welcome enough. The Prince, accordingly, without too lengthy a consideration, had given his consent. As for the likelihood of being called upon to implement his promise, that could be left to chance. He was in no worse position than the Eastern sage who, on pain of immediate death, promised to teach the sultan's ass to speak, but stipulated for ten years in which to accomplish the task, reasoning with himself that in ten years the ass might die, the sultan might die, or he himself might die. Before Charles could be called upon actually to marry the Lady Anne the political situation might alter, or the lady herself might refuse, and at the last extremity, if, as report said, the daughter of Argyle was so different from her father as to be a prize of beauty

and gentleness, the King confessed to himself that his fate might be worse. Meanwhile the situation possessed all the charm of an adventure to which the personal stake lent a peculiar interest.

No sooner, on the other hand, had Charles given his consent than he became eager to discover for himself the charms of the lady upon whom to some extent his own fate and fortunes were now made to depend. It was natural that he should wish to make her acquaintance and ascertain her disposition before any communication or injunction from her father should bring upon her the least prejudice or constraint. Towards this object no better means suggested itself than the escort which Montrose had agreed to hold in readiness at the close of the Privy Council meeting. Before even a special messenger could carry thither the message of Argyle, Charles himself would have reached Perth, and, availing himself of the hospitality of the marquis's household, with a lover-like impetuosity which that nobleman could hardly resent, he would have effected his purpose. Hence it came about that Montrose, waiting for the word which should raise him from the late irksome inactivity of the Court to his natural position of a leader in the field, and enable him to strike a blow at last for

his family fortunes and his King which, he secretly hoped, should bring him nearer to a still more warmly cherished end, found himself suddenly riding in an unexpected direction upon an errand which he was entirely at a loss to guess.

He was not left long, however, in this state of uncertainty. Aware that in common courtesy he owed his adherent some explanation for the sudden change of destination, Charles only waited until they were fairly out of the precincts of the city, on the road towards Kinross, before revealing to Montrose something of what had happened.

"After all, my gallant Graham," he said, "fate appears too strong for us."

"Your Majesty," answered Montrose, somewhat disconcerted by what appeared the royal fickleness, "has every right to change his mind."

"But the Graham," returned Charles with a smile, "does not feel bound to admire the change? Content thyself, however, my good Montrose! the word is still war, only the campaign is changed from the field of Mars to the Court of Venus, and, believe me, the light rapiers of that Court can be made to pierce to the full as keenly, and to serve our present purpose altogether as well, as the heavier broadswords of the field."

"You are pleased to be merry, my liege," re-

plied Montrose, by no means conciliated by the apparent tenor of the King's suggestion, "and I confess my poor wits find riddles difficult to understand."

"Tush, man!" returned the King, "if you must needs have a State secret in bald English—Charles Stuart, with the due permission of the marquis, her father, is about to pay his respects to the Lady Anne Campbell of Argyle."

The interest of these words to their hearer may easily be understood; the suddenness of their effect upon his appearance is hardly to be imagined. For a moment, as if an abyss of horror had opened at his feet, he was speechless, while the first rush of blood died away and left his face pale to the lips, and his unconscious clutch of the reins, like that of a man struck by a bullet, caused his horse to curvet violently. When at last he found words, it was only to ejaculate "My liege——" and again to become silent.

These spasmodic movements, however, were by no means lost upon the King. The sudden change of his companion's face he beheld with a look of amazement which quickly changed into one of pain. Pausing, however, to reflect a moment, he apparently made up his mind to take no notice for the present of what he had seen, but made it appear that he had been occupied at

the instant with a strap of his saddle harness. When he spoke again, however, it was in a somewhat quieter tone.

"You see, after all, my dear Montrose," he said, "the fairer sex has something still to say in our most weighty schemes. Helen of Troy was not the last who has made or mended war."

The brief pause which followed this remark was broken by Montrose, speaking in a low, controlled voice.

"Am I to understand," he asked, "that your Majesty intends at all hazards to urge this suit upon the Lady Anne?"

"Methinks, Montrose," replied Charles, a trifle haughtily, "a vainer man than I might answer that the suit, perchance, may need small urging. As for hazards,"—here he turned away to conceal a smile,—"*in affairs of love these must be taken as they come. Yet,*" he added in a less rallying tone, "I will be frank and confess that the matter lies altogether in the lady's hands. They say she is fair,"—here Charles glanced curiously at his companion, who grew, if anything, a shade paler at the remark—"if she prove equally kind I do not see how I shall resist. On the other hand, I warrant you, there shall be no compulsion. The man is a fool and deserves his cer-

tain fate, even though he be a king, who weds a maid without entire assurance of her heart."

More than once during this colloquy Montrose had been tempted to confide in Charles, but it had hardly needed a second thought to recall the fact that he had no right to forestall the free choice of Anne herself. He could not but remember that his own fortunes were most precarious, and that his ultimate hope of overcoming the feudal animosity of Argyle could be but slender. On the other hand, Anne, with the full approval of her father, was about to be offered no less an honor than the crown of Scotland, if not of the three kingdoms, while weighty matters of national policy hung upon her acceptance or refusal. It was true, at the same time, that his own love-suit with Lady Anne had already gone so far that in any lighter circumstances he might have been justified in throwing down the gauntlet of defiance to the presumptuous new-comer. A less scrupulous lover in his position might even have extended his justification so far as to afford a suggestion of the situation to the royal suitor. In the peculiar position of Montrose, however, this was out of the question; matters must be left to take their own course. Meanwhile the anxious lover was fain to comfort himself with the assurance which the King had given that no

undue influence should be suffered to coerce the lady. On this point only he allowed himself to venture a word of warning.

"A match so congenial, my liege," he said, "is not likely to lack the utmost fatherly furtherance of Argyle."

"Therein," replied Charles, "lies the chief point of fence. It were the part of but a blind worshipper to mistake copper gilt for true gold—filial obedience for love of the heart. Moreover, if report speak truth, the Lady Anne is not without a lover already who has doubtless seized every opportunity to push his suit, and she is the less likely, therefore, to play the part of willing catspaw."

"A lover!" exclaimed Montrose, with difficulty concealing his anxiety at the news. "Has your Majesty heard the name of this rival?"

"Tush!" returned the King, touching his steed with the spur to conceal his amusement. "I speak but by report. Some dashing fellow, doubtless, of our western nobles, favored perhaps by my Lady of Argyle."

With this, Charles put his horse to a canter, which effectually precluded further talk on the subject, while Montrose followed in a state of mind which may be left to the imagination.

Nothing further of note occurred until, a little

before nightfall, the party reached Perth. The discovery which he had made upon the road, however, had had some effect in altering the Prince's plans. Remembering one or two incidents—the accident of Montrose's arrival in Stirling in company with the daughter of Argyle, and the evidently tender *tête-à-tête* in which the young nobleman had been all but surprised under the walls of Edinburgh Castle—Charles found small difficulty in believing from his companion's confusion at suggestion of royal pretensions to the hand of Anne, that the interest of the young chief of Graham was more deeply engaged than he cared to confess. As that interest, from the circumstance of the *tête-à-tête* already mentioned, might be taken to be mutual, Charles felt compelled to a considerable change of his intended policy. While relieved from anxiety of one sort—the chance that his suit might receive a too ready acceptance at the hands of the damsel—he was now no less embarrassed by the necessity of playing a more complicated part. It was a kind of intrigue, however, in which, if history may be believed, he was already not altogether unversed, and he prepared with some interest to meet the emergency.

It was probably in pursuance of his change of plan that on reaching Kinross he sent a mes-

senger back to Dunfermline, to inform Argyle that he was already so far on his way to Perth—anticipating, as it actually turned out, that the politic marquis would lose no time in hastening to prevent such miscarriage of his plan as might occur from lack of his presence and influence with his daughter. The King also, on reaching the Fair City, departed from his original intention and took up his lodging at some distance from the ascertained residence of the family of Argyle.

Thus it came about that, instead of making a sudden dash, under pretence of lover-like impatience, to discover for himself from his reception at the hands of Lady Anne, while yet her natural preferences might be expected to declare themselves, exactly how much ardor or reserve would be necessary to his policy—instead of this he deferred making any approaches at all until the following day, and then he accomplished his introduction in the presence and under the full supervision of Argyle himself.

In order to understand the sentiments of the Presbyterian marquis at this juncture of his history, it is necessary to remember that he was entering not only upon a piece of diplomacy in which the most delicate tact was needed, but an intrigue in which success would be as triumphant

as failure could not but be ruinous. Should he succeed in bringing about the match which he desired, the long labors of his career of ambitious scheming would be crowned by an event which promised both to confirm power permanently in his hands, and to raise his house to a position in the State beyond the reach of rivalry. The darkest and most doubtful means by which he had wrought towards his ends would be more than justified in his mind if at last the race of MacCallum More could be brought to sit upon the Scottish throne. Whatever his reasoning with himself, having played for so high a stake, his presumption did not fail at the critical moment for securing the prize.

The time chosen for effecting the introduction which was to prove so fruitful of results to the House of Campbell, was the evening following that of Charles's arrival in Perth. In the first instance Argyle, departing for the nonce from his usual rule of banishing such worldly frivolities from his dwelling, had proposed to entertain the King with a banquet, in the course of which the royal wooer should be able to make the first advances in his suit. But, not unmindful, perhaps, of the extent to which the unscrupulous nobleman had already been tempted more than once to stretch his powers when an object of

his feudal ambition was at stake, and by no means desiring to be urged by any such ultimatum of force to a marriage on the spot, Charles had reversed this arrangement. He himself should hold a reception, which Argyle with his marchioness and the Lady Anne would be expected to attend.

It was still early, therefore, in the afternoon of the seventeenth of August when the streets of Perth in the neighborhood of the King's lodging gave signs that something unusual was astir. State carriages which had not been used since Charles I. last visited the neighborhood were now brought once more into requisition in order that the notables of the shire might duly pay their respects to their youthful sovereign. One after another in continuous succession these equipages, varied by a less imposing array of sedan-chairs, approached the precincts of the royal apartments and set down their burdens. For, whatever might be the qualified loyalty of the metropolis under the influence of the Covenanted Parliament, there was no lack of proper enthusiasm for the royal house in the gallant capital of the eastern Highlands. And as the occupants of the several conveyances stepped one after another across the plain-stones, and the good people of Perth recognized in them the

bearers of historic names of the countryside, a shout of acclamation again and again testified the good will of St. Johnston.

Within the royal apartments the scene was perhaps the most brilliant in which Charles had yet taken part since coming to Scotland. In Edinburgh his residence had been attended by no such outbreak of festivity as in later years was to mark the arrival, in somewhat similar circumstances, of his successor, Prince Charles Edward. It was reserved for the Highand lords and gentlemen upon the arrival of Charles II. in their midst to make a welcome worthy of the occasion,* and it must be confessed that in no point did they fall short of the most loyal demonstration. No dress in the world, perhaps, is more picturesque than that of the Scottish Highlands, and here it was seen to the utmost advantage, the flashing of jewels and waving of tartans contrasting effectively with the gallant Court dress—rich satin doublets ruffled and laced, wide knee-breeches tied with ribbon, fine silk stockings, and buckled shoes—of Charles's southern followers.

In the midst of this magnificence the King himself, dressed plainly but richly in dark ma-

* The magnificence of the young King's coronation, a few months later, in the ancient palace of Scone close by attracts the description of every historian of the time.

terial, and wearing no decoration but the order of the Thistle, appeared to the first advantage in a sphere in which he was peculiarly fitted to shine. Familiar, apparently, with the antecedents and family interests of most of those presented to him, he was able in the case of others to make so gracious a recognition of their personal loyalty that in no instance did he fail to produce a strong feeling in his favor.

It was when this scene was at its height, and Charles, moving from one group to another of those present, was, by the looks and expressions of royal interest which he knew so well how to use, confirming and strengthening in every direction the first impression he had made, that the Marquis and Marchioness of Argyle were announced. Even in that courtly assembly a perceptible pause occurred, and by an instinctive movement an opening was left, as the grim Presbyterian marquis, most dreaded as he was perhaps best hated peer in the realm, made his way, accompanied by his marchioness and the Lady Anne, towards the King.

Montrose, standing apart from a group near the door failed to hear, much less to reply to, the rallying speech of a young nobleman at his elbow who foolishly ventured to remark his unwonted paleness. He did not even see the quick

significant glance cast in his direction by Argyle himself, a glance which at another moment he would probably have returned with one as fierce. His gaze was intent upon the Lady Anne, and it was with a sudden unreasoning rebound of hope that he perceived her to be deadly pale. From this sign he was fain to feel assured that she had not been brought to the present pass without strong compulsion. In such sudden access of hope, however, he forgot to take account of the almost absolute power in the matter of their daughters' settlement which was exercised by the fathers of those days.

Argyle passed on; in due course his lady and he paid their devoirs to the King, and another moment saw the Lady Anne's fateful introduction accomplished. Then a thing happened which was considered to be especially significant by those who witnessed the proceeding. With a deep courtesy the *débutante*, as the custom was, was about to kiss the hand of the monarch, when by a quick and gracious movement he prevented her. Then turning slightly apart with her, he whispered half a sentence in an undertone, which had the effect of instantly suffusing the maiden's face and neck with blushes; whereupon, bending low, he pressed his lips upon her hand, and with a significant smile restored her to her father.

CHAPTER XVII.

“Though father and mother and a’ should gang mad,
It’s whistle, and I’ll come to ye, my lad.”

Scots Song.

AS has been suggested in the last chapter, the power of a father like Argyle over the disposal of his daughter’s hand was, in the days of which we write, all but absolute and unquestioned. The statement, of course, must be taken as applying only to families of high rank. Among the amenities of the humbler spheres of life then as now were to be counted those of greater freedom and less responsibility. Even to-day the daughters of the people enjoy in many ways a liberty which is not permissible to those of higher birth—a liberty which lends to their life some of its dearest charm, and must be considered as not the least compensation among the exigencies of a ruder fortune. The daughter of a noble house of the seventeenth century had, in the matter of her alliance, a more deliberate part to play than that of mere affection. Her marriage must be made

to serve the fortunes of her family, and nothing, therefore, would have been thought more out of the question than for a maiden to hope in this matter to follow so simple a plan as that of pleasing herself. Added to the worldly compulsion which might be brought to bear in the case, the injunctions of religion towards filial obedience were of themselves in those days more than sufficiently binding, and it would have been regarded as a breaking of one of the most sacred commandments should a daughter in this, the most important action of her life, refuse to follow the directions of her parents.

Thus it came about that Anne, on her father expressing his definite desire that she should receive the addresses of the young Prince with a view to accepting his hand, had ventured to offer little more than a negative resistance. A man of more scruple or of more delicacy than Argyle, it is true, might have trusted to subtler means to influence his daughter, or, if he had followed the blunter policy, would have needed no stronger expression of the girl's feelings on the subject to convince him of her reluctance and distress. As it was, the marquis had seen Anne grow pale and tearful at his first suggestion of the project, and he had seen the prospect which he had set before her, telling day by day upon her health and

spirits, without being in the least degree moved from his ambitious design. Such, he perhaps argued with himself, was no more than the conduct to be expected from an inexperienced girl, whose caprices and imaginings must in no way be allowed to interfere with the due working out of a family policy, and whose inclinations were likely to be soon enough bent in a more favorable direction by the wooing of a royal lover.

If this was his expectation it must have been strongly confirmed by Anne's demeanor upon her reception by Charles. Pale as a lily and trembling like a leaf, she had gone with her parents to be presented to the Prince. With nerveless steps, and limbs scarcely able to support even her light weight, she had made her way into the royal apartments. And lo ! a whispered word from the Prince, a tender salute, and her whole aspect was changed. The blushes had sped over her cheek and throat, her eyes had been cast down in apparent confusion and pleasure, and a smile had quivered about the piteous corners of her mouth. So obviously were these the signs of a sudden prepossession in favor of the princely suitor that even the Lady of Argyle, between whom and her lord there had been more than one scene of difference on the subject, now, not without some surprise at the behavior of her daughter, confessed

herself satisfied with the match. Anne's demeanor upon that occasion had also by no means escaped the quick notice of Montrose, who, with the sensitiveness of a lover, had proved only too ready to draw the worst conclusions from it.

Upon the occasion in question, Charles, with the courtly diplomacy of which he afterwards showed himself so deft a master, had succeeded in producing the result remarked, and in pleasing all persons concerned, by a simple enough expedient. He had merely whispered to the trembling girl that he had no higher wish than to be her true friend, and to do all in his power to further the suit of his cousin of Montrose; meanwhile he urged her to fear nothing and to keep her own counsel. These words had been the talisman which brought back Anne's lightness of spirit at the same time that, revealing the King's knowledge of her relations with another suitor, they covered her with surprise and confusion.

Montrose, however, had no opportunity of becoming aware either of the intentions of Charles, or of the thoughts of Anne herself. Argyle, mindful of the suspicions he had already acquired, of his lady's sympathy with so undesirable a suitor, was not likely to omit any precaution to prevent any weakness on her part from interfering with the issue of his plans. Thus it was that, in the

days following the Prince's reception, Anne found her secret efforts to communicate with Montrose frustrated continually in some simple but effective way.

Charles himself might have set his follower's mind at rest by a word or two, but several reasons probably prevented his doing so. In the first place, Montrose had not chosen to confide in him upon more than one occasion when he had the opportunity. The suspense itself, too, he might consider, was not a bad thing in its way, and would only add to the value of the prize in the lover's mind when that prize should at last be won. In these reasons there was just that slight spice of mischief which in later years, in affairs of the kind at his Court, characterized the proceedings of Charles. But behind them, probably, lay unconfessed a much more weighty consideration. In the critical position in which he was placed, it was just possible that he might be unable to escape Argyle's entanglements, and so be compelled to marry the lady after all. In that case probably he thought he could trust to her woman's nature to reconcile Anne herself; it would be another and entirely different matter to break a faith once pledged to one of his own sex.

So it came about that Montrose, from both directions to which he might have looked for in-

formation, was left entirely in the dark. Worst of all, just when matters, so far as he was concerned, stood in this unsatisfactory state, news suddenly reached Perth that a crisis had arrived at the seat of war, and he was despatched with the greatest urgency by Charles to watch the issue of the movements on the south side of the Forth.

Torn by distracting thoughts, and filled with the gloomiest misgivings, it was, at the moment, with something of a feeling of desperation that he received the secret but imperative message of Charles which was to carry him away from the scene of his hopes and fears, and from all opportunity, little as such opportunity seemed likely to occur, of helping his cause with the daughter of Argyle. But once armed and mounted, and in the open air, his natural courage began to rise; action, bold and stirring, was at least before him, and among the movements of the armies in the field, which he was sent to watch, he began to see the possibility of issues deeply affecting both himself and the object of his hopes. He would have given much to have been at liberty before leaving Perth to make one last effort to effect a communication with Anne, and for a moment he thought of riding slowly in his armor past the mansion occupied by Argyle, in order at least to apprise her,

if she happened to be at any of the casements, that he was leaving the city. His errand, however, demanded not only despatch but some measure of prudence, and it hardly needed a second reflection to convince him of the folly, in the circumstances, of flaunting his departure on the King's mission before the notice of Argyle. With a single sigh for his hard fate, therefore, he turned his horse's head towards the south, and, followed by Guthrie on a round-barrelled steed, which that worthy had himself chosen for certain qualities of strength rather than appearance, set forth on the road leading out by the Wicks of Baiglie.

Here, however, by one of those surprises with which fortune sometimes reverses an entire train of circumstance, he was suddenly furnished with new and exciting food for thought.

It was immediately after leaving the gates of Perth, and just when his steed, clear of the interruptions of the narrow street, was settling down steadily to the long journey before him, that Graham became aware of a carriage rapidly approaching the town from another direction.

None but people of the highest rank at that time used this form of conveyance except upon state occasions, and the young Cavalier knew of no function calling for ceremony just then afoot in Perth. His impression that the occupants of

the carriage must be persons of the first importance increased as the great vehicle drew near, swinging heavily on its leathern springs. A few moments served to bring it within a stone's throw, its six horses dragging it at a smart pace over the inequalities of the road; and as he drew to the side to let it pass, a sudden fire shot to his heart, and the jerk which he unconsciously gave to his horse's rein almost drew the animal to its haunches.

The window of the carriage was open, doubtless for the heat of the day, and within, for a moment, he had caught sight of the sinister face, and had met the piercing gaze of Argyle himself. But another thing, of much more exciting import, had happened at the same time. Sitting there, with her back to the horses, as the carriage whirled past, for one flying second he had seen, and exchanged a look of recognition with no other than Anne herself.

Immediately afterwards as, wild with excitement, he gazed after the fast-departing chariot, he saw a slender hand appear at the carriage window, and a white handkerchief flutter to the ground.

Anne doubtless had chosen a moment when her father's gaze was turned away, to drop the signal—for a signal it undoubtedly was; and as

Montrose picked it up and placed it carefully in his breast, a whole tide of hot, new emotions seemed surging through his heart and brain. It was as another man that he turned at last, resettled himself in the saddle, and patting his steed, with a word of light-hearted raillery to Guthrie, who had remained during the entire occurrence discreetly silent, resumed his journey towards the seat of war.

To return to the King, however. When at his first meeting with Anne, in the manner which has been described, he whispered the words which wrought such an instant change in her feelings and appearance, it must be said for him that he in no way doubted his power finally to thwart the intentions of Argyle, and not only to escape himself from the meshes of entanglement woven around him, but to play the pleasant part of *deus ex machinâ* in bringing about the happy union of Montrose and the Lady Anne. For the accomplishment of this purpose, however, it may be surmised, he had trusted rather to the chapter of lucky accidents, and to that good fortune which is said to help the brave, than to any very definite plan of action which he could have formed. So it came about that, as the days ran on, he had cause more than once to doubt his ultimate power of successfully resisting the ambitious design

of Argyle. Not once losing sight of the purpose to be attained, that nobleman turned every accident and phase of the situation to account, and brought forward pretext after pretext for the hastening of the marriage. At the same time, he had craft enough to see to it that the Prince did not lack opportunities of becoming better acquainted with his daughter ; and it was with satisfaction that he perceived his diplomacy apparently gaining ground. As the Presbyterian forces in the field continued uniformly successful, the political power of Argyle attained ever more confirmed and formidable proportions, while resistance to his will became less and less possible, not to say politic. Nor was it to be expected that the disposition of Charles should continue utterly proof against the charms of the maid with whom he was brought into relations of so much delicacy. Perhaps, indeed, it is not too much to say that, as time passed, the chief danger of the situation lay in the feelings of the young King himself.

Matters were in this position, and Charles had, so far, successfully avoided committing himself to any definite arrangement with regard to his alliance with Anne, when news arrived that the English army was in full retreat from Edinburgh. The intelligence was communicated to the King

by Argyle himself, and from the excessive calmness and deliberation of the latter at the interview, the young monarch concluded with apprehension that the Presbyterian leader was about to play his trump card. It was therefore with no little misgiving that, on the evening of the day on which the news of the retreat had arrived, Charles received the announcement that the marquis sought a second audience. The particulars of this meeting, and of the dramatic events which immediately followed it, must form the subject of a separate chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"The day it was fixed and the bridal to be."

Lady Grizel Baillie.

IT had been a day of chill, continuous rain, such as not unfrequently happens towards the beginning of autumn, and a fire had been lighted in the royal apartment. Charles, alone for the moment, was leaning against the side of the ingle watching the play of the clear wood flames about the brass dogs on the hearth, and indulging in thoughts evidently of a mixed and bodeful character, when the Presbyterian marquis was announced. As the latter advanced into the room from the fitful shadows which the firelight cast upon the arras, the King started to see the central figure of his musings appear thus bodily in his presence. Of late Argyle had presumed upon the position of a prospective father-in-law to insinuate his company at all times and seasons upon Charles, till the Prince had come to feel almost haunted by the sombre figure, with its

constant prying supervision and the air of constraint which it brought.

It was this feeling which at the present moment struck with peculiar discord upon the humor of Charles ; and in other circumstances, it is probable, the intruder would have fared but indifferently at his hands. The Prince, however, was politic enough in the immediate instance to give no sign of irking, and it was in a perfectly controlled voice that he greeted the statesman.

"My lord," he said, turning to his visitor with a half familiar inclination of welcome, "you have already to-day been the bearer of pregnant news ; further dispatches must be of pressing import."

"Despatches have indeed reached me," returned Argyle, "but they bring no news beyond the fact that the enemy continue to retreat. It was, however, of a matter more personally concerning us both that I came hither to speak, using towards you the liberty of one who is presently to assume the close relationship of a father."

Here the speaker gave the strongest evidence of his assumption of the liberty of which he spoke by turning a tapestry chair from the wall at hand to face the firelight, and seating himself on it in an attitude of familiar ease while the King still remained standing.

If it had never before dawned upon the mind of Argyle that Charles was more politic than sincere in his dealings with him he might have found cause for suspicion now. At an ordinary moment the young King might good-humoredly have condoned the liberty thus taken in his presence by a courtier so much older than himself, but, in the circumstances in which this nobleman now stood to him, even so slight an act assumed a vital significance. A threatening flash leapt to the eyes of Charles, and the lines of his features, even at that age strongly marked, deepened for a moment with resentment. Recovering his self-possession instantly, however, he gave no further sign of disapproval than that he himself remained standing during the interview. It is possible that, while cognizant enough of the real disposition of the Prince towards him, Argyle was too conscious of his own possession of actual power to set much store upon the present feelings of Charles. Against emergencies of the future he hoped, by the alliance of his daughter, and other means, as we have seen, amply to safeguard himself. At any rate, if he did notice anything ominous in the King's manner at this moment, his countenance gave no intimation of the fact, and he went on to broach his errand.

"Our enemies," he said, "are borne backward by the breath of Providence."

"And by the able tactics of General Leslie," added Charles, dryly.

"There are differences of opinion as to the masterliness of the general's tactics," returned Argyle. "Some of the Parliament and the divines, having visited the camp, assert that the sectaries, but for the lack of faith of our commander, might have been destroyed utterly from the face of the land before now."

"Yet I do not doubt that Leslie knows his own business best," answered the King, "better at any rate than preachers, whose place, methinks, is more fitly the pulpit than the field of war. Your own military experience, my lord, must have shown you thus much."

Charles spoke with a careless insouciance, but at the casual mention of his inglorious career in the field Argyle looked sharply up. His suspicions of a sinister design in the words, however, if he had any, received no confirmation from the sober expression which rested upon the features of the Prince; and he was fain, therefore, to take the remark in good part.

"In the condition of parties in the country at present," he said, "the opinion and influence of these preachers have nevertheless to be taken

into account, and to come more directly to a profitable issue, it is to speak of a rumor brought to me from them, and likely to do heavy harm to our cause if believed, that I have sought the present interview."

"If the matter concerns the ministers," returned Charles, "I fear I must leave it to you, my lord, to deal with it; my word is likely to have but small weight among these gentlemen."

"Yet it is upon your Majesty's word that the whole question arises; and with your Highness rests the sole power of turning aside the difficulty which threatens a new dismemberment in our councils."

"My lord marquis," said Charles, with a gesture of impatience, "I am weary of these mysteries, of the continual doubts and questionings of Churchmen, whose reverend office, it were well they were told, has no whit to do with affairs of State."

"Yet, if you will give me leave to say it," answered Argyle, "the whole difficulty is one that can be settled by a single word from your Majesty."

"Let the word be said then," exclaimed Charles, recklessly; "that is," he added with more caution, and his face darkening as he spoke, "if it imply no treason to the royal prerogatives

or dishonor to the royal house—a forbearance which it seems almost too much to expect in the requisitions of these reverend meddlers.”

“To speak the truth, to which I pray God ever to confine me,” returned the wily statesman, “no requisition from the Assembly to your Majesty has of late reached my hands. The matter is a more delicate one, which only my deep and sincere regard for the royal interest induces me to step so far beyond the reserve of private feeling as to open. An over-delicacy, however, in some situations, I am persuaded, may prove a serious fault, and I do not fear misunderstanding at the hands of so clear-minded a Prince as your Majesty. To come briefly and bluntly to the point, I must make you aware that while the intimation of the royal intention to espouse a daughter of Argyle had striking and immediate effect in strengthening the hands of the Government, there have not been wanting within the last few days those who have given forth that the royal attentions to the Lady Anne were no more than a temporizing on your Majesty’s part, which might easily be put aside when the necessity for it should pass.”

“And perhaps,” returned Charles, “my Lord of Argyle has himself been not indisposed to give credit to such a rumor.”

As he spoke the young King could not prevent a conscious flush rising to his cheek at the secret truth of the insinuation. This incident was by no means lost upon Argyle, though he might naturally enough draw different conclusions from it. It is possible that, believing as he did that the attractions of Anne had not been without considerable effect upon the Prince, he took the flush for no more than a sign of natural resentment.

"God forbid," he returned, "that I should in anything doubt the assurances of your Majesty! On the contrary, it is entirely out of my humble duty to the throne that I am come hither to acquaint you with the rumor. So little indeed am I inclined, as a father, and a servant of the Crown, to listen to these slanderous treasons, that I do not doubt your Majesty will take immediate steps to put them to absolute silence."

"And the means which you would suggest?" asked the Prince, not without a certain quickening apprehension.

"There is one means final and unquestionable," answered Argyle, looking steadily at the royal youth before him; "marriage cannot fail to settle at once and fully all such groundless suspicions."

"Marriage, my lord marquis!" exclaimed

Charles ; and turning from the spot where he had hitherto stood during the interview, he took several paces across the apartment.

Prepared as he had been for some such proposition on the part of Argyle, he was not wholly prepared for the peculiar emotions to which it gave rise in his own breast. To any young man the idea of so serious a step as marriage brought thus suddenly before him must prove sufficiently agitating, but in the Prince's actual circumstances at the moment, the suggestion was more than ordinarily disturbing. As an expedient to gain time and to effect the purpose of the hour, the agreement into which he had entered with the ambitious statesman served satisfactorily enough ; but, to begin with, the sole hope of Charles had been, as the marquis then certainly guessed, to temporize, and he had regarded it as no more than a ruse of the most immediate policy. The actual marriage of the King with the daughter of such a subject as Argyle was for State reasons by no means desirable. Charles, besides, was sufficiently aware of the disposition towards the Lady Anne of the feelings of Montrose. On the other hand, however, opposing these considerations, the Prince had had time and opportunity enough to make acquaintance with Anne herself—an acquaintance which could

hardly occur without giving rise to some tender regard. The sudden proposition of MacCallum More perhaps surprised him into the discovery that he was not entirely indifferent to the maid. And, at the first blush, the idea of coming into such near relations with her, and that immediately, was strangely exciting. In the natural tremor of the instant the utmost he could think of was once more to temporize.

“Marriage!” he ejaculated. “Why—why, my lord, the transaction were somewhat precipitate. I have not yet discovered reason to hope that the Lady Anne——”

“Anne,” interrupted Argyle, “will act as becomes a dutiful daughter of her house. And,” he added hastily, seeing, perhaps, that Charles was about to take exception to such extension of the sphere of filial duty, “her parents have had opportunity of perceiving what has been with proper maidenly reserve hidden from the eye even of a royal lover.”

Here Charles turned away, but his interlocutor could perceive that his words had not been without effect.

“That reserve, however,” he went on firmly, “though right enough in its own place, must yield to the political necessities of the time. To speak but the truth, in affection for the interests

of one whom I am privileged by Heaven to look upon already almost as a son, it were well, to prevent further perils and defections threatening the State, that this wedding should take place as soon as may be."

The situation was urgent. In spite of the studied respect of his address, there was in the manner of Argyle a peremptory air of sufficient significance. As he felt this, the habitual coolness of Charles returned to him immediately. To thwart the marquis at the present moment would, in the existing position of affairs, be ruinous. It would also be foolish, considering that a better occasion of evading the difficulty might yet occur. Accordingly it was with an appearance of entire self-possession that the young King now spoke.

"In that case, my lord," he said, "we may doubtless prefer the urgency of the time as an excuse for naming an approximate date."

As he made this tentative sounding to discover the exact extent of Argyle's urgency Charles toyed with a jewel on his finger.

MacCallum More followed up his advantage with the steadiness of a sleuth-hound.

"Looking to the state of the nation's temper, and the responsible place it is permitted us to hold," he said, "I would name to-morrow; but

as that might seem to hasten your Majesty's arrangements overmuch, I am inclined more doubtfully to urge that it be within a week. Let us say Tuesday to come, if the Lord be willing to spare us. That will be the second day of September."

Notwithstanding his calculated self-possession, on hearing the nearness of the proposed day Charles felt something like the cold dew of consternation appear upon his forehead. He could think of nothing better to urge, however, than the suddenness of the intimation to Lady Anne.

"But your daughter, my lord!" he exclaimed. "Will not she be somewhat unfairly pressed by so near a date?"

Argyle made the nearest approach to a smile of which he was capable.

"Your Majesty," he said, "will presently be better acquainted with the secret heart of the sex. Anne will follow the counsel of her parents, and I would have you believe that to the maiden this is no unwelcome pressure."

There was nothing left for Charles but to agree.

"In that case, my lord marquis," he said, "the matter is in your hands. At so short an interval, however, there can be no public preparations."

"These can follow later," returned Argyle, when the state of the kingdom permits of

greater ceremonial. Meanwhile the announcement that the marriage has been privately performed will fully serve our purpose. Your Majesty, therefore, will hold yourself in preparation for Tuesday next."

Charles bowed, whereupon Argyle, assuming a paternal air, laid his hand on the Prince's shoulder, and was proceeding to invoke a pious and paternal blessing upon his future son-in-law, when the latter contrived to overturn an ivory ornament with which he had been trifling, which fell with a crash at the marquis's feet. Upon this, MacCallum More, darting a single swift look at the author of the accident, made shift to cut short the sentence he had begun, and with a greeting which was no more than a hasty one, bowed himself from the apartment.

For some time afterwards Charles paced disorderly up and down the chamber, before he finally threw himself into a chair to gaze ruefully into the sinking embers of the fire.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Then rose the slogan with a shout,

'Fye, to it, Tynedale!'—'Jedburgh's here!'"

"The Raid of the Reidswire."

IT is now necessary to return to General Leslie and the fortunes of the Presbyterian army under his command, holding the approaches to the city of Edinburgh against the forces of the English Independents.

The information brought to the Scottish general on the morning of Charles's visit to the camp had in every respect proved well founded. Cromwell, finding his direct path to the metropolis along the coast barred by the masterly tactics of his opponent, had determined upon a change of front. Breaking up camp, therefore, he marched south, intending to attack the city upon another side before Leslie should have time to take up a defensive position. The Presbyterian preachers had, as we have seen, done what they could, by fomenting sectarian prejudices, and by "purging" out of the camp many of his

ablest captains, to embarrass the movements of their general. It was, therefore, with the greatest difficulty, and only by the most active personal exertions, that Leslie succeeded in forming a new line of defence in time to meet the threatened attack. This, however, he finally accomplished so skilfully that the English general once more found himself checkmated. Hopeless of success in the new direction, and fearful of finding himself, as was already to some extent the case, cut off from his basis of supplies in the fleet, Cromwell presently marched back to the coast, where, with but ill success, he engaged in a series of desultory attacks upon the Scottish outposts. For nearly a month he lay there, endeavoring ineffectually to bring Leslie to an action.

But the latter was too able a general to allow himself to be thus entrapped. By skilful disposition of his defences he trusted, and indeed proved, himself able to maintain his ground and finally to accomplish his purpose; but he was well aware that, if once drawn into the open field, his hastily-raised levies would stand but a poor chance against the veteran disciplined troops of Cromwell. Accordingly, in spite of the repeated urgings of the Covenanting ministers, who grew every day bolder with the delay of the English attack, he kept his forces carefully in hand within

the lines. It was in vain that morning after morning enthusiasts like the Reverend Mr. Nevoy came down from their quarters in the city, and added to the difficulties of the general with loud-voiced exhortations, in the words of the prophets of Israel, to "go forth in the strength of the Lord to battle, for the forces of the Amalekites were delivered up to be consumed before His wrath." With singular magnanimity these gentlemen appropriated, as the results of their righteous prayers and exhortations, the credit of every successful brush with the enemy, while they did not fail to discredit the general with his men, as far as possible, by attributing every petty reverse to his lack of faith.

Notwithstanding the labors of these self-constituted critics and orators, Leslie steadily, though with increasing difficulty, restrained his troops and kept his ground; and at last, despairing of success, and fearful of provisions running short, the English general began a retreat. This was as Leslie had calculated, and he now prepared to carry out his plans by following the march of the enemy, carefully avoiding any engagement in which he might be taken at a disadvantage, and waiting until circumstances or a false step on his opponent's part, should give him the opportunity of striking a decisive blow.

But, if the preachers had been insistent before, they became ten times more so now. Encouraged by the favorable turn of affairs, they flocked from the town to the army, where they failed in no point fully to discuss the various orders given to the troops. The success already attained they ascribed, consistently with their previous habit, not to the tactics of the general, but to their own prevailing prayers and the special dispensation of Heaven. Presuming upon this, they did not cease to urge more active measures of attack, and Leslie's refusal to join battle at once they stigmatized as the reluctance of Ahab to execute God's behests upon the head of Ben-hadad—an application of the instances of Scripture which they backed up with assurance of the wrath of Heaven upon "the cause" if so fair an opportunity were missed.

Matters were in this position—the army distracted between the positive commands and discipline of General Leslie, and the inspired exhortations of the preachers—when, on the afternoon of the 1st of September, Cromwell was observed to be at last reduced to a difficult strait.

Slowly, accompanied by his fleet, the Independent general had made his way along the coast, and had passed the town of Dunbar. Here he found himself with his army on a small plain out

of which his only route to the south lay through a narrow pass between the sea and an outlying spur of the Lammermuir Hills, which spur, completely commanding the pass, he perceived to be already occupied by the forces of his opponent. The situation was not only embarrassing in the extreme, but one out of which no escape seemed possible without most serious loss. Perhaps no more obvious case of checkmate in the field has been instanced. The storming of the heights in front, occupied as they were, seemed out of the question ; to attempt a passage through the defile below was to court destruction piecemeal ; while if he left the coast and marched inland his army must be starved. A final resource, and one upon which Cromwell is said to have determined, was to embark the infantry on board the fleet, while he himself with the cavalry endeavored to cut their way through the Scottish host and escape as best they could ; but even this operation had the perilous condition of being performed in face of an enemy who might at any moment take advantage of the weakness and disorder occasioned by the embarkation, and, rushing down from the heights, put the troops remaining on shore to utter rout.

This was the situation towards which the tactics of Leslie had been bent for the last two months ;

in a few hours at furthest he counted on being able to strike a blow which should at once free Scotland from the attempted dictation of the English sectaries of the south, and establish, both north and south of the Border, the unquestioned authority of Presbyterian government. The 1st of September had been a day of much fatigue to him, commanding, cajoling, and threatening in turn the members of a staff vain enough to prefer argument to obedience. But at last, having seen to it personally that his orders as to taking up position had been carried out, as he rode along the edge of the eminence, in full armor but with his visor up, and looked down upon the enemy, there was visible upon his swarthy features a glow as of one who had earned his reward. Night was already closing in gray over the sea, while, on the plain below, the watch-fires of the enemy began to appear. Before another night should darken down, or the hostile camp-fires again flame out, he hoped to see his object accomplished, and the cause of Charles II. and the Scottish Parliament assured.

At this moment he was approached by a second horseman, who, although his face had not been visible, might at once have been recognized by his grave and deliberate speech as Lord Lorne.

“There will now, I presume, General Leslie,”

he said, "be no longer any weighty reason for delaying attack, since another day may remove the object of it beyond our reach."

Leslie turned sharply with a lifting of the brows which betokened some annoyance, but it was, nevertheless, with a perfectly even voice that he answered—

"I thank you as before, my Lord of Lorne, for your counsel, but I profess ignorance of any sudden occurrence which can have led to its renewal."

"The intelligence brought providentially by the escaped missionary Crookshanks should, I would have thought, have left no doubt of the evening's possibilities and the consequent urgency of the situation."

"A fugitive bringing intelligence!" exclaimed Leslie, biting his lip with ill-concealed exasperation; "I must inquire of your lordship why he has not been brought at once to headquarters?"

"Being a humble servant of the Covenant," returned Lorne, "he deemed it his duty, doubtless, to report his intelligence first to the Committee of the Kirk accompanying our troops."

"And by them it has since, doubtless, been sufficiently and publicly discussed," answered Leslie. "However, I must instantly see the man."

An orderly was accordingly despatched at once for Crookshanks, and after but a short interval, occupied by Lorne in communicating what he had ascertained of the news, the luckless missioner was brought before the general.

The reason for Mr. Aaron Crookshanks' sudden appearance in a scene so little likely to be favored with his voluntary presence may here be detailed in a few words. His last ingenious proceeding chronicled in these pages, it may be remembered, was an attempt to elicit the tender regards of that entertainer of the elect, the worthy Mrs. Murdoch of the Netherbow. Upon that occasion his laudable effort to secure an independence and a spouse was rudely interrupted by Guthrie's announcement that the city was on the point of being attacked, and at the intelligence he unaccountably disappeared. An hour or two later, however, since the truth can no longer be hid, he was discovered by the astonished widow asleep in no less sacred a place than within the drawn curtains of her own four-posted bed. The fact, of course, was that he had fled there for hiding at the moment in a sudden access of terror, and had subsequently fallen asleep from the effects of his previous too generous entertainment. But no reason or excuse which he could offer was listened to by the virtuous and indignant Mrs. Murdoch, and with

the injunction, stated in sufficiently forcible language, that he should never again darken her doors, he was summarily ejected from her dwelling. Upon the following morning, hearing of the repulse of the enemy's night attack, and in mortal fear, notwithstanding his valiant offers of defence to the widow, of personal hurt which he might suffer if the city happened to fall into the hands of the English soldiery, he made up his mind to escape from Edinburgh while there was yet time. Unfortunately, however, in fulfilling this intention, he took a road which led him directly into the lines of Cromwell's new approach from the south, whereupon he was promptly secured by the enemy as a person whose information might be turned to account. The knowledge which he was able to impart of the character and views of leading personages of the Presbyterian party had proved useful to the English general in directing the efforts of his insidious diplomacy, and the missionary had accordingly been detained until the army passed Dunbar. Here he had heard enough of their counsels to understand that the greater part of the English forces were about to be embarked on board the fleet, when the opportunity suddenly occurred to him to make his escape.

The appearance of Mr. Crookshanks as he was now brought before the Scottish general differed

little from that in which he first presented himself in our story as he suffered ejection from Killearn inn. A month's unexpected campaigning, though his bodily wants otherwise had doubtless been sufficiently supplied, had reduced his outer man to much the same condition as the summary treatment of his former host. His black coat had become somewhat threadbare, and his woollen stockings were more than a trifle frayed, while his hair and beard appeared to be in sad need of a barber.

All these details, as well as the probable character of the fugitive before him, Leslie took in at a glance. It was his business to appraise men instantly at what they were worth, and in the present case the task was not a difficult one.

"Ha!" he ejaculated, "you are a fugitive, you say, escaped from the enemy's camp?"

"Even so," returned Crookshanks, "a Lot escaped from the city of Gomorrah, a Joseph——"

"Suspected of having been hired to spread disaffection among the Scottish troops, to decoy our movements with false intelligence, and therefore to be punished as a spy with death."

At this prospect, equally unpleasant and unlooked for, held forth at a moment when he had been considering himself a person of no small

merit and importance, Crookshanks collapsed into a pitiable spectacle. His face became pinched, his jaw dropped, and his knees shook, while his tongue refused to utter a syllable.

“Are you a minister of the Kirk?” queried Leslie, with a frown.

“Nay,” the unfortunate Crookshanks found breath to say, “not an ordained minister indeed, but an humble——”

“So!” returned Leslie, sternly, and turning to his guard he added: “In that case to the provost-marshal with him.”

But on seeing his fate approach thus imminently, Crookshanks’ organs of speech became suddenly loosed, and falling on his knees where he stood, he began to pour forth a piteous stream of assurance and entreaty. Accustomed, however, to such scenes, Leslie was about to turn away with a wave of the hand, when he was accosted by a spectator of the scene who had hitherto remained silent. This was no other than the young Marquis of Montrose, who, notwithstanding the ban which had been pronounced against the presence of Malignants with the army, had obtained permission to attend the progress of the Scottish troops during the last few days. Standing with others close by, he had heard and witnessed the colloquy we have just recorded. He now advanced, and in

an undertone ventured to say a word for the hapless missionary.

"I have some personal knowledge of this man," he said, "and I think I can undertake for his honesty, if you will give me leave."

Leslie turned to his new interlocutor with an air of some impatience.

"My lord," he said, also in an undertone which could only reach the ear for which it was intended, "I understand and appreciate your humanity; but pardon me if I say you scarcely comprehend the situation. The man may be honest, but he has already done us damage enough, risked the lives of us all, by scattering broadcast among our firebrand orators the news of Cromwell's intention to embark. Nothing short of his death can repair that damage, and prevent a general and ruinous movement of our troops, by convincing them of my entire disbelief in the truth of his intelligence."

"It is a high price to pay for a mistake," urged Montrose, "and besides, if I can believe my eyes, the purpose which might be served by the deed is already past."

As he spoke, the young nobleman pointed westward along the ridge of the hill.

There it appeared at once evident that the general's worst apprehensions had been realized,

and this much more quickly than he could have thought possible. For days the warlike enthusiasm of the Scottish forces, under the exhortations of their preachers, had been at combustion point; the news of Cromwell's intention to embark his troops, communicated by Crookshanks, and carried from rank to rank with astonishing speed by the preachers, had added the last spark; and now the discipline of months proved powerless to restrain the popular impulse. With the cry that the forces of the Amorites were about to escape them, the Scottish regiments simultaneously started from their vantage-ground, and began hastily to march downhill.

This was the movement which met Leslie's eye as, following the indication of Montrose, he cast a glance along the hillside. That single glance was enough. With a fiercely muttered exclamation, through his clenched teeth, he struck his spurs into the flanks of his steed, and dashed instantly off in the desperate but vain effort to prevent the fatal blunder which was being committed.

The rest of that night's work need not be recapitulated here. Following the Old Testament examples set before them by their preachers, and obeying, as they believed, the Divine behests, the opinionated and ill-disciplined Presbyterian

levies marched down into the plain. When Cromwell, just then on the point of confessing himself out-generalled, and relinquishing the campaign, observed this movement, he is said to have exclaimed, "The Lord hath delivered them into our hands!" and he immediately and joyfully prepared for battle. The troops of the Scottish Parliament nevertheless, overmatched as they might be, still fought desperately enough when it came to actual encounter, and made a stubborn stand during the hours of the wild night, struggling indeed so obstinately against the better-trained forces of their opponent, that at one time victory seemed almost in their hands. But at that moment the sun threw his first beams on the battlefield as he rose gloriously out of the sea, and Cromwell, calling out to those about him that the Lord had given them a sign of victory, headed a new attack in person, which finally turned the fortune of the day.

It was at this moment, when one regiment of the Presbyterian troops had already broken and fled before their charge, that a detachment of Cromwell's cavalry came suddenly upon a compact and apparently resolute company of the Scottish force headed by a person in clerical garb who, a Bible in one hand and a pistol, which he had snatched from the ground, in the other, was

with violent gestures exhorting his companions to renew the attack.

"Throw down thine arms, Sir Presbyter!" shouted a sergeant of the roundhead cavalry, as he galloped up, "in the name of Cromwell."

"In the name of God!" sternly returned the other, who by voice and face might have been recognized as Argyle's own chaplain, Mr. John Nevoy; and taking deliberate aim, he discharged his weapon.

There was a shout, and as the sergeant fell backwards out of his saddle, Nevoy's head was cloven in two by the sabre of the succeeding trooper.

Meanwhile, in another part of the field, forgetting everything but that his country's independence was at stake, Montrose had given a gallant account of himself. In more than one encounter his sword had done knightly service, and his shout of "A Graham! A Graham!" had made a frequent rallying point when the fortune of the day began to turn.

It was only when the tide of battle seemed to ebb for a space from the part of the field where he had fought, that, looking from a slight eminence and perceiving the day to be irretrievably lost to the Presbyterians, the thought of the more personal issues which hung upon the encounter

returned in full force. With the defeat of the Presbyterian army, he remembered, the power of the Marquis of Argyle must be considered to be broken, and the possible effect of that event upon the proposed marriage of the Lady Anne with King Charles set the blood on fire in every vein of the young Cavalier. He had been informed that, with a view to adverse possibilities, the date of the royal marriage had been hastened by the father of the bride, but he was not aware that it had been actually settled to take place privately on the very afternoon of the day which had just dawned. Had he known this he might have put forth more desperate efforts to arrive at the ear of Charles in time with his news. As it was, turning his horse's head from a scene which was now little more than one of flight and carnage, he proceeded to make the best pace possible westwards towards Queensferry and Perth.

CHAPTER XX.

“O where will I get a bonnie boy
To help me in my need?”

“*Lady Maisry.*”

ON the morning of the second of September Charles found himself in a position of extreme perplexity. When compelled by force of circumstances to agree to Argyle's proposition that his marriage should take place upon this date, the Prince as before had trusted largely to the chapter of accidents for a valid excuse to postpone the time. But day after day had passed by without the slightest occurrence which could be made to do duty as a plea for delay. The tactics of Leslie in the field had continued uniformly successful, and in consequence the prestige and power of the Presbyterian marquis were more assured and absolute than ever.

This was the situation of affairs when the actual day appointed for the marriage at last arrived, and Charles, hopeful and trustful of his own powers of resource at a pinch, as he was apt

to be, may be forgiven if he realized the fact with very definite dismay.

Within the week, as other circumstances seemed to fail him, he had even meditated flight itself as a last resort. Three months later, chafing under a similar constraint upon the eve of his coronation, he actually did take horse for the north.* Meanwhile, however, the preparations for a sufficient rising of the royalist clans to receive and support him had been delayed by several unforeseen occurrences, and this morning as he looked from the window of the royal apartment he perceived that any such attempt at flight as he had meditated had been effectually provided against, the guard of honor for the day, mounted in the courtyard below, having been supplied from Argyle's own following of clansmen.

It was half-past nine of the morning as the

* "The melancholy solemnity had been nearly prevented by the absence of the principal personage. Charles, disgusted with the invectives of the Presbyterian clergy, and perhaps remembering the fate of his father at Newcastle, formed a hasty purpose of flying from the Presbyterian camp. He had not been sufficiently aware of the weakness of the Royalists who recommended this wild step, and he actually went away to the hills. But he found only a few Highlanders at Clova, without the appearance of an army, which he had promised himself, and was easily induced to return to the camp with a party who had been dispatched in pursuit of him."—*Tales of a Grandfather*, chap. xlv.

King, drawing the curtain and looking from the casement, became aware of this circumstance. Some thirty minutes later he was still seated at breakfast, over which a lengthy piece of rhetoric, by way of blessing, had just been pronounced by the attendant Presbyterian chaplain, Mr. John Livingstone, when MacCallum More himself was ushered in.

"We have early the advantage of your presence this morning, my lord," said Charles, somewhat sardonically, as he acknowledged the measured bow of his visitor.

"Upon the threshold of so auspicious an occasion," returned Argyle, cautious to conceal under an appearance of increased humility the actual triumph of the moment, "the anxiety of a father may be permitted, regarding the condition of his royal son that is about to be. I have," he continued, casting a glance in the direction of the Rev. Mr. Livingstone, "been instant in prayer in the night watches for the royal security and happiness in the sacred contract to be undertaken this day."

"I perceive, nevertheless, my lord," retorted Charles, dryly, as he dipped a fragment of toast in the cup of claret at his hand, "that your thoughtful solicitude has not confined itself entirely to the instancy of prayer. The royal

security appears further to have been provided for by mounting over these apartments a guard of members of Clan Campbell itself."

"Your Majesty," answered Argyle, imperturbably, "has already perceived what I was about to hasten to point out. On the eve of the King's marriage with a daughter of their chief, the guard of the royal apartments is fittingly kept by gentlemen of the clan of which Heaven has permitted me to be the unworthy head."

"As it is the daughter of Argyle, however," returned the Prince, sharply, "who is about, it would appear, to become a member of the House of Stuart, and not the representative of the royal House who is about to become an appanage of the family of Argyle, the guard of the royal apartments might as fittingly, methinks, have been left in the hands of the more usual troops."

The marquis was about to reply with an air in which professed humility and forbearance but thinly covered the obvious consciousness that he was master of the situation; and the discussion might presently have assumed very pretty proportions; but at that moment there was heard, on the causeway of the street without, the ring of a horse's hoofs at the gallop, which pace was broken to a trot as the steed apparently entered

the royal courtyard, when the sound of voices in loud altercation betokened that the rider found some obstacle in his way.

The state of affairs in the field at the time was so critical, and it was so well apprehended that at any instant a messenger might arrive with news of vital importance, that the point under discussion between Argyle and Charles was for the moment dropped as by mutual consent, and neither of the two made scruple of hastening to the casement to ascertain what they could of the new arrival. Curiously enough the scene being enacted on the causeway furnished to the eyes of the Prince a significant if unwitting comment on the passage of arms which had just taken place between himself and Argyle.

In the horseman who, jaded and travel-stained, had now thrown himself from his steed and was endeavoring to gain access to the royal lodging, the reader might have recognized no less masterful a personage than Neil Guthrie, the redoubtable factor and factotum of Montrose. The urgency of his errand, whatever it was, was apparently receiving but small consideration from the gentlemen of Clan Campbell who had mounted guard on the entrance steps. These individuals, at the moment when Charles looked

down upon the scene, were, with drawn swords and pistol in hand, firmly refusing admittance to the new-comer.

"I tell ye," the latter was exclaiming with gathering wrath, "it is for the ear o' the King only that my message runs, and never a Campbell o' the clan, not MacCallum More himself, shall have the chance of playing hoodie wi' the errand o' my lord Marquis o' Montrose."

"And I will be telling to you, my young man," retorted one of the persons addressed, shaking his sword the while in Guthrie's face, "I will be telling to you that Clan Campbell is master here, and that you will speak at your peril to the disparagement of the Marquis of Argyle; and if so be that you have a message from the son of James Graham, you will just wait till my lord marquis says if the King is to be allowed to hear it."

"A brave speech!" retorted Guthrie, contemptuously, "but ye maun understand that the message o' my lord the Marquis o' Montrose stops for no creature o' Gillespie Grumach.* So stand back, I say, and let me pass, if ye wouldna seek a kiss o' the cold steel."

With these words the doughty messenger laid

* Gillespie the Grim, a nickname applied to Argyle on account of his peculiarity of visage.

his hand on his own sword, and as the guards still seemed determined to dispute his passage, bloodshed appeared imminent; but at that instant the King threw open the casement.

"Put up those swords," he exclaimed hastily. "You, gentlemen of the guard, must be informed that you exceed your duty in refusing to give notice of a messenger's arrival."

Here Charles stopped, for the persons addressed, evidently hesitating to obey, seemed to look first for confirmation of the order to Argyle himself, whom they saw in the window beside the King. The hesitation was no more than momentary, but it spoke volumes to the Prince.

"My lord marquis," he exclaimed, turning to the nobleman with indignant warmth, "it would appear as if the obedience of these men to my authority were conditional upon your lordship's acquiescence."

"It is the habit of the clansmen," returned Argyle, gravely, "to obey no other, not even the King himself in the presence of their chief."

"In that case," retorted Charles, more hotly, "these men can be no fit sentinels for the royal lodging. Meanwhile, my lord, perhaps you will give order for the messenger to be introduced."

This was an issue, however, which Argyle

would fain have prevented had that been possible. News of vital importance from the army might be in the possession of Montrose's messenger, and it was for obvious reasons no part of the policy of MacCallum More to let Charles acquire information which had not previously passed under his own scrutiny.

"It will be seemly," he said, "that I first ascertain whether the message is weighty enough to warrant the bearer's personal admission to the presence."

"Of that trouble, my lord, we will relieve you," returned Charles, with some severity, "especially since in this instance I believe the messenger stated his errand to be for our private ear."

As there seemed to be no help for it, Argyle was forced to acquiesce, though evidently with but a bad grace; and presently Guthrie was shown into the royal apartment. At this point the marquis was again destined to chagrin, for the King, rejecting the movement which his courtier made as if to join in the audience, drew Montrose's messenger aside to an alcove from which, with the utmost attention, Argyle was unable to catch a syllable of what passed.

"You come from my lord of Montrose," said the Prince, when fairly out of earshot. "When and where did you leave our army? Speak low,

my good fellow, and give me your message briefly and to the point."

"I left the Scots host yesterday at nightfall," replied Guthrie with soldierly promptitude, taking care, as advised, to keep his voice in an undertone, "and I must crave your Majesty's indulgence that I am not here sooner; but there were creatures of my lord of Argyle's at the Queensferry that wad fain have stopped me, and as there were three o' them it took a stiff style of persuasion to bid them let me pass."

Charles smiled significantly. "I think I understand," he said. "And where was the host when you left it last night?"

"When the sun set," answered Guthrie, somewhat sententiously, "it was posted on a spur of the hills barring the English march southward along the coast—as strong a camping-ground as your Majesty could have wished; but when I left them the raw levies were, it was to be feared, full on the road to ruin—'descending to meet the Philistines in Gilgal' I heard one o' their preachers call it. It was then that my lord of Montrose bade me take horse and carry to your Majesty news of what was befalling. He bade me bear his loyal service to your Majesty, and say that a battle was certain within the hour, but that the issue, as the host had broken from the control of

its officers, was more than likely to be disastrous. He himself, he bade me say further, would, if he lived, bring your Majesty the earliest tidings upon the fate of the field. Meanwhile, in token of his trust to be of service to your Majesty, he sends your Majesty this ring."

As Charles took the signet which Guthrie held out to him his features paled slightly and his hand perceptibly shook. It was the ring which in his last straits in the north the Great Montrose had confided to Guthrie as a warrant to raise the Royalist Grahams of the Lennox; and in the carved emerald with its raised gold setting the Prince recognized a jewel which had been his own parting gift and pledge of good faith to the famous general as he set forth on his last ill-fated expedition. Arriving at the present crisis of affairs, it struck Charles with a strong significance. By whatever force of circumstances he had been compelled to keep but a doubtful faith with the father, the ring he felt would convey a ten times multiplied reproach if he now betrayed the interest of the son. To delay the marriage ceremony, therefore, if only for a few hours, must be his immediate object. In that time, it was apparent, news might arrive which, declaring the defeat of the Presbyterian army, and the consequent loss of power of the Presbyterian marquis, should

enable him finally to break off the undesired match. How to accomplish this delay was the most pressing difficulty of the moment.

Meanwhile, drawing a jewel from his own finger, he pressed it upon Guthrie as a reward for the perils of his journey, and, bidding him keep his own counsel regarding the news he had brought, he dismissed him with the injunction to remain within call of the royal lodging.

CHAPTER XXI.

“It’s ye maun busk this bonnie bride,
And put a gay mantle on ;
For she shall wed this auld French lord,
Gin she should dee the morn.”

“*Fair Janet.*”

As Guthrie took his departure from the royal apartment he passed close by Argyle, and a less keen observer than the King might have noticed the narrowness with which MacCallum More scrutinized Montrose’s messenger. It was as if he would have read Guthrie’s tidings in his face. Far from blenching in that ominous presence, however, the bold man-at-arms returned look for look, and Charles saw with some amusement that the wily statesman for once had met his match in conscious imperturbability.

The door was little more than closed, nevertheless, when Argyle proceeded to make inquiries at the King himself.

“The news from the field of war,” he said, approaching the latter, “is doubtless of some significance?”

"It is indeed of moment," returned Charles, with an air of ingenuousness calculated to disarm any suspicions which his interlocutor might entertain. "I have just been informed that the event for which you lately expressed a desire is on the eve of taking place."

"Your Majesty is pleased to task my memory," answered Argyle, with some difficulty attempting to conceal his anxiety. "I do not remember—I must beg——"

"You have forgotten, my lord," said Charles, with the utmost appearance of candor, though secretly perhaps not unwilling to prolong the suspense of the marquis, "that a few days ago you expressed disapproval of the war's delay, and were good enough to criticise the slowness of General Leslie's operations. By this time our army will have redeemed that reproach."

"Your Majesty has news of a decisive engagement?" asked Argyle, speaking, in spite of his caution, more quickly than usual.

"When the messenger left the field our troops were advancing to the attack, led, as I understand, by their preachers."

"Their preachers!" exclaimed Argyle, with dismay in his voice.

"Inspired in matters of war, I have no doubt," added Charles, quietly, "as Elijah was of old."

"You speak of what you know not," said Argyle with whitening lips, the true attitude of his mind towards the King beginning to appear in this unguarded moment. "The fanatics!" he went on, turning angrily to pace the apartment. "As if the skill of one good officer were not worth all the——"

Here the sight of the Rev. Mr. Livingstone, still attending within earshot, recalled the necessity for prudence. MacCallum More paused, and seizing his chin with his right hand in an attitude of exasperation, wheeled again to the window where Charles was standing.

"The matter is likely, at any rate," said the latter, "to be decided by this time."

"By this time," echoed Argyle, the natural timidity of his disposition leading him to foresee the worst event, and his cheek growing sickly pale at the thought of possible consequences—"by this time the army of our defence may be scattered as chaff before the tempest."

In another moment, muttering to himself, as he hastily pondered the situation, he added—

"There is one thing, however, to be done. It must not be in their power to say that the war was made by us without royal warrant. The royal approval must be testified unmistakably—by the seal of the King's marriage." Then turn-

ing to Charles, he said with decision, "Three of the clock this afternoon was the hour appointed for the celebration of the royal wedding; your Majesty, however, must now see it to be expedient that the event should take place at an earlier moment?"

"Nay, my lord marquis," said the King, somewhat taken aback by this unexpected issue of the morning's intelligence, "rather, methinks, should the ceremony be delayed. It were but an indifferent kindness to bestow upon the Lady Anne a crown that may be without a kingdom."

"It is in such a circumstance," answered Argyle, "that my daughter's trust must show itself. Moreover, I would have your Majesty remember that, whatever the issue of this day in the field, Royalist and Presbyterian must still, were their hands once joined, be able to make a successful stand against the sectaries of England. In this respect, your Highness must see, the royal house gains no small advantage by an instant alliance with the House of Campbell."

"Particularly," answered Charles, "when that House of Campbell has at its head so brave and so successful a general as my lord Marquis of Argyle himself."

At this taunting speech, launched by Charles, as a last resource, in the hope of making a prac-

tical breach with MacCallum More, Argyle became all but livid with suppressed wrath. He retained control of himself, however, though one dangerous and ominous glance flashed like a flint spark from his cross-eyes; and saying only, with stern deliberation, "Your Majesty will be pleased to hold yourself in readiness for two of the clock," he withdrew from the apartment.

Left alone presently, the King, with an air of graver seriousness than usually characterized him, walked slowly for a little to and fro in the chamber. Then turning to the window as he passed it, he once again thoughtfully looked out. The gentlemen of Clan Campbell were still mounting guard below, and others, to all appearance equally staunch henchmen of MacCallum More, were in evidence in the immediate neighborhood.

"It is to small purpose!" he exclaimed at last, throwing himself with abandon upon the window-seat. "The old fox has too often had occasion to fly by a side door himself to leave his quarry's earth unstopped at this time of day."

"Well," he added, after a somewhat gloomy pause, "if it must be, it must, and"—here he absently drummed a tattoo with his finger-tips upon the beading of the wainscot—"were it not that faith should be kept with Montrose, the match of this afternoon might be no such irk-

some matter after all. The fair Presbyterian, from what I have seen of her, were like to make a comely and sweet consort enough. But Montrose——” Here Charles’s eye fell upon the emerald shining on his finger, and his face darkened with remorse and resolution. “The Graham,” he said, “has suffered too much already in the royal cause.” Then he added more slowly, with a frown almost of ferocity on his youthful face, “My lord Marquis of Argyle, there is a long account to settle at your hands, and if ever the hour shall arrive——” He broke off abruptly. “There is yet, however,” he exclaimed, more energetically, “one other card to play before this game is decided.” And rising from his seat he touched a silver handbell on a table near.

“Inform his Grace of Buckingham,” he said, when an attendant entered, “that the time of our engagement for this afternoon is hastened by one hour.”

Meanwhile Argyle, with a strangely mixed air of apprehension and resolution, had betaken himself from the presence. As he left the royal lodging he took occasion to whisper a few words in Gaelic to the two sentinels at the door, and these individuals at once assumed an increased aspect of vigilance. Casting then a look of some trepidation in the direction from which news might be

expected to arrive from the south, he proceeded, with as much haste as was possible without exciting undue attention, towards his own residence.

There a scene of some interest was in process of enactment. In the private dressing-room of the Lady of Argyle the marchioness and her daughter were for the moment alone. The anticipated event of the afternoon, it was evident, was the momentous subject in the thoughts of both. Anne, pale and tremulous, with more than a suspicion of wetness in the dark circles of her eyes, was kneeling at her mother's feet, and the quivering corners of her mouth wore an expression of piteous pleading. The elder lady, her hand laid gently on her daughter's forehead, was looking down with features in which natural tenderness and compassion seemed curiously blended with the strong notions of parental and filial duty current at that time. It was one of those moments, rare even in the close relations of domestic life, when, at the white heat of real feeling, heart opens to heart without disguise, and the last worth and reliance of affection find their proof.

"We are in the hands of God," the marchioness was saying, "and it is but ill done to repine at His dispensation. Few, alas! in this sorrowful world can hope to gang their ain gate even in the

dearest things of life, though it takes mair winters than have whitened yet on your young head to find that out. She would be wise who knew how few o' the noble ladies that have been queens of Scotland were wedded to the secret desire of their hearts, though they sat on the Scottish throne; yet they have been true helpmeets according to their lights. I would have ye think that, in the great place it is given you to fill, ye may become an instrument of the Divine Providence to bring peace and the true faith of the Covenant upon this distracted realm. And indeed the young Prince——”

“Oh, mother!”

At the mention of her affianced consort Anne covered her face with her hands in passionate distress.

“My sweet, sweet bairn,” exclaimed the marchioness, with mixed affection and remonstrance in her voice; “ilk ane has her weird to dree, and weel ye ken I would turn back this day's act if that were possible. But all has been said that can be said, and it's sair sorrowing for what canna but come. It would seem to be the finger of Providence, or Heaven would have set a seal against it ere now. And it is the will of your father, obedience to whom, I maun still remind you, is the first commandment with promise.”

Here the Lady of Argyle took her daughter in her arms, and, with a demonstration of affection which was then even rarer between members of a family than it has become between comparative strangers, pressed a kiss of compassionate tenderness and reassurance on her brow.

At that moment the door of the dressing-room, or boudoir as it would now be called, opened, and discovered the person of Argyle himself.

"I am glad, madam," he said, "to hear you school our daughter to so reasonable a consistence, the more so that within the next few hours the fortunes, not only of our house, but of the kingdom itself, may hang upon this matter."

Upon the appearance of the husband and father a curious change had taken place in the demeanor both of the marchioness and of Lady Anne. The latter had started back from her mother's embrace, and stood regarding her sterner parent with apprehension in her eyes and a hectic flush on her cheek. The marchioness, on the other hand, the affectionate softness of a moment previous fading from her manner, turned to face her husband with something of the aspect with which a tigress might be supposed to face the hunter in her den.

"These are bodeful words," she said, "to come from the lips of Argyle. It is fit, however, that

they should be nothing less than truth, when so dear a price must be paid for the bargain. My lord, again I maun ask you if there be not yet time to play the game with other counters than our daughter's happiness?"

At these words there flitted over Argyle's features an expression as nearly as might be approaching a smile.

"Weighty purposes of State, madam," he answered, "are hardly to be turned aside for the wanton notions of a girl, to whom, I would remind you, dutiful obedience is like, after all, by the blessing of Heaven, to bring the most lasting happiness. But the time is past for discussing such subjects; momentous issues—my own life"—here Argyle paled and perceptibly faltered—"depend upon the transaction of this day; and I am come hither myself personally to inform you that, for urgent reasons, the hour of the ceremony has been hastened. It will now take place at two instead of three of the clock."

To this announcement the Lady of Argyle made no reply, but as the marquis left the apartment she sank into a chair and looked anxiously at her daughter.

Upon Anne herself the effect of her father's words had been somewhat strange. She had heard what was said with perfect distinctness, but,

like one whom a blow has deprived of all nervous sensation, she seemed to hear without feeling, and she now moved and spoke with a mechanical calmness, the outward sign of a stupefaction which might have been mistaken for resignation. Her face, however, had become, with the exception only of her lips, a deadly white.

She was no less pale, but also no less mechanically self-possessed when, two hours later, she stepped, leaning on her father's arm, through the chancel of the ancient church of St. John, which had been selected for the marriage.

As the ceremony was to be kept strictly private meanwhile—a provision of the shrewd and cautious Argyle—there were but few persons in the church. These few, among whom could be distinguished Charles himself, were grouped in the open space immediately in front of the high pulpit; and, in spite of the silence and emptiness of the sacred edifice behind them, they presented rather a brilliant and distinguished appearance. The Court for the occasion had thrown off the sombre and gloomy air to which it had of late, for peace's sake, been compelled by the sermons and lectures of the Presbyterian ministers; and such wardrobes and decorations as could be mustered had been donned to do honor to the happy, if somewhat peculiar, circumstance of the hour. Among the

rest, Malignants and Presbyterians, notwithstanding Parliamentary mandates of exile, and the denunciations of the Assembly, the Duke of Buckingham was there, gay and careless, and ready at a pinch, or even without it, to carry off the bride himself if she should prove fair enough. But most gallant of all, as became a royal bridegroom, appeared Charles himself, his coat and stockings of carnation silk, richly laced and embroidered, his ruffles of the finest point-lace, his vest and breeches of white satin with gold buckles in his satin shoes, and the star of the Order of the Garter glittering on his breast.

At once, upon catching sight of the Lady Anne, he came forward and with the utmost courtesy led her to her place, contriving by the way to convey to her a whisper which brought the light once more to her eyes and the color for a moment to her cheek.

In another moment the minister, the Rev. Robert Douglas, the same who afterwards preached Charles's coronation sermon at Scone, proceeded in a solemn voice to open the simple form of marriage service customary in Scotland.

“The sacrament of marriage——”

He got no further. Just then the clank of spurs and the clash of a sword were heard on the pavement of the church, and a rider, with blood

on his cuirass, and spattered from head to heel with the mud of lanes and roads, staggered rather than walked towards the astonished wedding-party. The new-comer had parted with some of his heavy armor, but he still wore his breastplate, and his helmet effectually concealed his face.

The King himself stepped forward.

"You bring tidings from General Leslie?" he asked; and there was a breathless pause as the stranger replied—

"The Presbyterian army was at daybreak this morning totally routed near Broxmouth, a mile and a half beyond Dunbar."

At this intimation there was a visible stir of sensation in the group under the pulpit. Each stared apprehensively at his neighbor, and for a full minute not a word was said, the minister himself pausing, perturbed by the tidings.

At last Argyle spoke, laying on the King's sleeve a hand which shook in spite of his utmost effort.

"The disaster is by no means irremediable, I would assure your Majesty, and it were well that our present business be meanwhile proceeded with."

"I think not," dryly returned the King. "Indeed," he added, "I have little mind by so close an alliance to draw down upon so staunch a friend

as my lord Marquis of Argyle the penalty which is soon likely enough to overtake my own head."

"Parfoi!" said his Grace of Buckingham, joining in with a smile and a shrug of his handsome shoulders. "It seems to me, my liege, as if the bride were of a like mind to your Majesty."

The duke had good reason for his words, for at this point the little group, recalled to the more immediate proceedings of the occasion, and turning to resume their attention, discovered to their immense surprise, that in the confusion, and aided by the heavy, outstanding architecture of the church in which they stood, the Lady Anne and the bearer of news from the field of battle had both disappeared.

CHAPTER XXII.

Meantime far hind, out ower the lea,
 Fu' snug in a glen where nane could see,
 The twa, wi' kindly sport and glee,
 Cut frae a new cheese a whang.

"The Gaberlunzieman."

WE must ask the reader to pass with us over the events of the next few months—months of stress and foreboding in Scotland.

On the first of January, notwithstanding the presence of the victorious English army in the kingdom, Charles had been crowned, with all the ancient ceremonial, at Scone, the diadem being placed on his head by the hands of Argyle himself. Shortly afterwards, assuming a more vigorous share in the actual government of the country, the King had taken command of the army in person. For more than a month after entering the field, so skilfully were his troops posted, he had kept the English forces in check near Stirling, and it was only at last by the baseness of one of his officers in Fife, who suffered an English de-

tachment to effect a lodgment there and cut off the royal supplies and communications, that Charles had lately been reduced to a critical situation. In this difficulty, the actual subsistence of his army rendered precarious by the footing which the enemy had secured in his rear, the King had found himself compelled to assume a more active and aggressive policy than prudence would otherwise have advised. With a view to bringing matters to the immediate issue of a battle, he had despatched a sudden and urgent summons to all within reach, who were well-affected to the royal cause, to join his standard without delay. The chiefs of certain clans especially, who might be able to bring a considerable number of men into the field, had been enjoined to use their utmost personal influence; and among others dismissed hastily from the camp upon this somewhat perilous errand was the young chief of the Grahams.

Meanwhile, during all those months, the utmost efforts of Argyle had failed to obtain tidings of his daughter. Whatever suspicions he may have had of the complicity of Charles himself in her disappearance, these received no countenance from the demeanor of the young monarch, who seemed every whit as surprised and curious regarding the vanishing of his intended bride as her father could possibly be.

The fact was that Argyle, like other over-politic schemers, who occasionally find the fact out to their cost, had in this matter met his match, and been defeated with his own weapons. No one in the city or in the church had recognized the mud-splashed and blood-stained bearer of tidings from the battle-field, and when Montrose a few days later appeared at Court among other survivors of the campaign, his arrival was regarded as a matter of course, and his reported valor in the field was the only thing about him that excited comment. The flight of the Lady Anne could be traced no farther than the gates of Perth, out of which, it was ascertained, a veiled female answering to her description had ridden a few minutes after the disappearance from the church, accompanied by two well-mounted cavaliers. Beyond this no information could be obtained.

Early on the particular Monday morning to which we would now draw the reader's attention, the inquiries set on foot by Argyle regarding his daughter formed the subject of conversation of two riders hastily approaching Glasgow from the eastward.

The foremost of the two, attired in the dress of a dealer who might be coming to town to arrange the sale of some cattle, would scarcely have been recognized without at least a second glance as

the same young Cavalier who had been the unwilling cause of popular disturbance in the cathedral precincts a year earlier. Months of campaigning had bronzed his features, hardened his physique, and given a firmer assurance to his voice and bearing. His companion, in the hoddie gray suit and blue Kilmarnock bonnet, somewhat worse for wear, of a muirland drover, might have been still more difficult to recognize as the former rescuer of the young nobleman—the indomitable Neil Guthrie.

“And so,” Montrose was saying, with a glance of inquiry, “you think those good people are still to be trusted, notwithstanding the reward offered and the constant fear of discovery?”

“I’ll stake my head,” answered Guthrie, boldly, “that my lady is safe i’ the keeping of Bessie Frew; and as for discovery, Clan Campbell will send far ere they seek for her i’ the Bishop’s Castle o’ Glasgow.”

“Unless,” returned the young nobleman with a twinkle in his eye, “some Campbell sweetheart perchance come whistling o’ nights under the fair Bessie’s window, and discover the Lady of Montrose as Neil Guthrie discovered Montrose himself.”

“It’s a feat that,” answered Guthrie, stoutly, “that’s like to cost the Campbell dear that tries it.”

Bessie's a true lass since she cam' to her senses; and foreby that"—here the hardy rider looked a trifle foolish—"I was thinking, if your lordship was to be in Glasgow for an hour or two this morning, it might be a fair chance to set Bessie's troth beyond dispute. There's a kindly minister at hand i' the Rottenrow who wad mak' short shrift wi' the matter in the circumstances."

Montrose smiled. "Like master, like man!" he said to himself; adding aloud: "It would hardly become me, I suppose, to set an obstacle in the way of such an enterprise. Only I must remind you of the dangers of these times, and the risk of a stray bullet any fine morning making a man's wife a widow."

"The more reason," replied Guthrie, energetically, "that he shouldna waste time in making her his wife. It's a risk, moreover, that the best maun bide, and a risk, to judge by the field of Dunbar, that is apt to be little regarded by the Chief of the Grahams."

At this home-thrust Montrose looked suddenly grave, and it was only after a moment's pause that he spoke again.

"I wish you and your wife, at any rate, my good Guthrie," he said, "long life and the greatest happiness together. When these troublous times are over, I do not doubt of being able to

make substantial proof of my good-will. At present I am sorry I can only ask you to accept what may suffice for a bridal trinket for your wife." And slacking his pace somewhat, Montrose pressed a small rouleau of gold into his follower's hand.

The latter had time for no more than a few hasty words of thanks, when the riders passed together through the Drygate port of Glasgow.

There were English sentries at the gate, for, as it turned out, Cromwell had spent Sunday in the town, and had not yet returned to camp. But as the policy of the general was to appear everywhere as far as possible friendly to the people, the soldiers had orders to interfere as little as might be with persons of apparently peaceful intentions and occupations. The two horsemen accordingly, under cover of their assumed character, were allowed to pass without question. With a view to avoiding unnecessary observation Guthrie took the lead, and making use of his acquaintance with the less conspicuous thoroughfares of the town, piloted his companion presently to the stable entrance at the rear of the Zion Inn.

Some business had apparently drifted to that hostelrie since Guthrie's last visit there. A half-dozen ostlers or two and several idlers of the pecu-

liar species generally to be found in such a place were lounging about the yard, while the number of horses in the stalls made it evident that the Zion Inn no longer lacked custom. From the lad who helped him to stable and feed his own charges, Guthrie learned that a party of Cromwell's officers were quartered in the house. This information, by way of precaution, he conveyed to Montrose, but at the same time, whispering that the passages were dark enough to prevent recognition if they were on their guard, he led the way by the narrow stone-paved entry he had made use of on a former occasion, towards the sanctum where his uncle, the landlord, was likely to be found.

By a fortunate chance they encountered no one on their route, and at last, ascending a couple of steps to the left, Guthrie pushed open the door of Sandy Spigott's private parlor.

"Verily the prayers of the righteous are answered!"

The landlord himself, somewhat more rubicund, and certainly more rotund than when we first made his acquaintance, was, with his coat off and his back to the fire, in the act of setting down a bicker from which he had just drained his morning draught. But the words were not his. The expression came from a second individual

in the apartment, whose health Spigott had presumably been drinking, and the empty quaich in whose hand seemed to infer that the courtesy had been mutual. This person, in whom Montrose at once recognized with some surprise his quondam protégé, Mr. Aaron Crookshanks, assumed at sight of the new-comers an attitude of startled amazement, though he took care to keep secure hold of the bottle of cordial spirits which he held on his arm. From his succeeding remarks he appeared to attribute the bodily preservation of the young nobleman before him, whom he had last seen rushing to what looked like certain destruction on the field of Dunbar, to the efficacy of his own prevailing intercessions with Heaven.

“Heaven preserveth the preserver of the righteous,” he exclaimed, “and turneth away the edge of the sword from him that proclaimeth mercy. Verily, I render thanks that I have been able to repay with more than empty gratitude the intercessions of this goodly youth! I bless God for the fact that my rescuer in the evil day still lives.”

“That is a fact,” said Montrose with a grim smile, “regarding which you will still further show your gratitude by keeping a profound silence.”

“Since you particularly desire it,” answered Crookshanks, who, with an increase of the signs of prosperity in his appearance, seemed to have assumed an increase of blatancy in his address, “I will hold my peace; albeit it may prejudice the cause of righteousness that I hide under a bushel that which should be proclaimed from the house-tops. But I must even now hasten to perform my errand, lest the preacher of the Word faint before the face of the ungodly.”

And with an unctuous bow to Montrose and a familiar nod to the landlord, Crookshanks placed the bottle of strong waters out of sight in an inner pocket, and took himself from the company.

“What may be the present calling of your customer?” asked Montrose, a little later, when, after a characteristic greeting between Guthrie and his good uncle, the latter was hastening with his own hands to place before his Royalist guest the best the house could afford by way of morning repast.

“That, your honor,” said Spigott, as after a steady pull he uncorked a flask of Burgundy, “is a body o’ mair conceit than brains, Aaron Crookshanks by name, wha, nevertheless, kens the inside o’ the ongoings down at the College near by, seeing he is beadle and valet to Dr. Zachary Boyd, the minister o’ the Heigh Kirk. An’ a

bonnie cantrip he had just gi'en me the story o' when your honor cam' in."

Here, having filled his guest's cup, and being invited to fill one for himself, mine host, after the manner of his calling, apparently felt himself bound to contribute to the amusement of the stranger in his parlor.

"Your honor's health!" he said, lifting the bicker to the level of his forehead with solemn abstraction. "As I was sayin', it was a queer pliskie for a great man like the English general to play. Ye will hae seen that the streets are fu' o' the English louns—no' that I hae a word to say against them, for some are in my ain house at this moment. But Cromwell himsel' cam' here frae Stirling on Saturday, and what does he do yesterday but walk up wi' a wheen o' his officers to service at the Heigh Kirk. Zachary Boyd was the preacher, a dour thresher out o' the shortcomings o' ither folk at the best o' times; but when he saw wha was in his audience, Crookshanks declares, he fleeced ten times waur than ordinar', misca'in' Cromwell and his English officers for a' the Malignant brood o' darkness itsel'. Cromwell ne'ertheless kept a calm sough, and hearkened him out, though they say ane o' his officers sittin' ahint him was for sendin' a bullet into the pu'pit mair than ance. But efter the

service the general gangs hame to his lodging i' the Sautmarket, and by and by he sends up a message to the College askin' Dr. Boyd to come till him to supper. The Doctor went, wi' the thocht, it seems, that he had made some impression by his discourse, and that he might become the instrument o' bringing the English general to anither mind on some particular points o' doctrine. But Cromwell said little o' doctrine till efter supper, and then he put it that he was about to hae family worship, if Dr. Boyd wasna against taking part. Presently they got down on their knees, and Cromwell prayed, and he keepit the worthy doctor on his marrow banes for three hours, gie'in' him ten times waur wi' his tongue than he had gotten himsel' i' the mornin'; and when the prayer was done the doctor was broken i' the hams and speechless, and had to be oxtered hame by Crookshanks and ane o' the young English officers. But "—here mine host broke off his narrative and hastened to attend to the more material wants of his guest—"ye surely arena breakfasted yet? There's a bonnie bit o' cauld lamb, black-faced, frae the Eaglesham moors; and the Burgundy's no' out."

It can be understood that neither Montrose nor Guthrie, however, were in the humor to linger long over their repast, necessary as that was



"SHE STOPPED AT AN IRON-STUDDED DOOR ON A NARROW LANDING."—Page 301.

after their long and rapid ride of the morning, and curious as might be their host's garrulous narrative of the retribution which had befallen the reverend firebrand of the cathedral pulpit. No sooner, therefore, were the imperious demands of appetite satisfied than they proceeded upon the errand which had been the sole reason for their entering the town. It was not many minutes, accordingly, after leaving Spigott to finish the flask of Burgundy by himself, when the two seeming rustics were making their way across the ruinous courtyard of the old Bishop's Castle.

Guthrie gave a peculiar knock at the door of the keeper's lodging, and in a trice it was opened by Bessie Frew herself, looking fresher and more tempting than ever, if that were possible, in the morning air. At first she appeared alarmed at the unfamiliar figures who presented themselves before her; but in a moment she had seen through the disguise, and with a smile and courtesy to Montrose, and a glance at Guthrie which made that stout yeoman draw his hand down his moustache to conceal an expression of particular satisfaction, she admitted them, and forthwith led the way trippingly up the narrow stair.

After ascending several rounds of the stone spiral she stopped at an iron-studded door on a

narrow landing, and, first knocking gently, ushered Montrose into the chamber beyond.

As she drew the door close again and turned to retrace her steps, the damsel found herself suddenly caught in a pair of energetic arms and the life for a moment all but crushed out of her, while her feeble and but half-hearted efforts at remonstrance were smothered by a rough but warm caress upon her lips.

"Weel," she exclaimed with a frown which was more than half a smile, when at length she was able somewhat to free herself, "a bonnie while ye have been in coming back!"

"And a bonnie hurry I am in," answered Guthrie, dauntlessly, "now that I am here."

"Eh, dear!" exclaimed Bessie at this, with some apprehension troubling her look, "the lass has a weary time that has sic a restless seeker o' danger for her sweetheart."

"Listen to me, Bessie," said Guthrie, gravely, "needs must that we leave this place again in an hour, and it's a far cry till the chance may come again. I want ye to wrap your plaid about ye, and we will step up to the Reverend Master Cunningham i' the Rottenrow, and be made man and wife or the hour's out."

At this sudden and startling request Bessie changed countenance and trembled a little, hang-

ing her head in silence for some moments, while a deep blush slowly covered her face and neck; but at last she looked up, and there was a new light shining in her eyes as she spoke in a low, altered voice.

“Since you indeed wish it, Neil, I will come with you. I will just speak a word to my father first, and get my plaid.”

Half an hour later Montrose was still sitting in the corner chamber of the tower. Beside him, her happiness in the presence of her lover only made more tender by the necessity of parting from him again so soon, sat—no longer Lady Anne Campbell of Argyle, but the young Marchioness of Montrose. For, to put their union beyond all question, they had been married on the day on which Montrose carried her off from her forced betrothal in the church at Perth. From the window where they sat they had observed Guthrie and Bessie Frew cross the causeway towards Rottenrow, and Montrose understood that his follower was fulfilling the intention expressed an hour or two before. The couple, their mission, it might be presumed, accomplished, were now to be seen making their way back again.

“And must you indeed be gone so very soon,” the young Lady of Montrose was saying, with

something of reproach in her voice, "and you know not how long, how exceeding long, it may be before we may meet again?"

"My love," answered Montrose with a reassuring smile, "the King's cause may any day be triumphant. In that case be certain that in a few hours I myself shall be the bearer hither of the good news. Meanwhile——"

At this point a sound of commotion in the town, which had been increasing alarmingly for several minutes, assumed a distinct character. Groups of men-at-arms could be seen hastening in one particular direction, here and there a horseman appeared urging his steed at the gallop, and above the other din the sound of bugle calls were clearly to be heard.

Montrose, from the window, saw Guthrie detach himself from his new-made wife, and after apparently making inquiries at a knot of the townspeople, come hurrying towards the castle. Anxiously the young nobleman awaited the intelligence, whatever it might be, which gave rise to so much military preparation. Nor was he long kept in suspense. Mounting the turret stair three or four steps at a time, Guthrie wasted no words in prefacing his news.

"The King has broken up camp before Stirling, and is already in full march towards the Border.

The English troops in Glasgow are under orders to march within the hour."

Montrose turned to his wife with mingled excitement and tenderness.

"I must be gone, dear wife," he said.

At the announcement the eyes of Anne filled with sudden tears. In another moment, however, she recovered herself.

"Go then, my lord," she said, "and I will pray every hour that God may keep you. But come back before very long, for—for——" Here her face was suffused with rosy blushes, and leaning her head on her husband's breast, she spoke in a whisper.

The young husband bent down, caught his wife in his arms and pressed a passionate kiss on her lips. In another moment he was gone.

* * * * *

Few words are needed to complete what has to be said. The pressure of necessity had compelled Charles to break up camp much sooner than he had intended, and long before the expected accession to his forces could arrive. Owing to the rapidity of the King's movements Montrose did not succeed in coming up with the Royalist troops before the disastrous defeat at Worcester,

which put an end to the royal pretensions in England for the time. Neither did he fall into the hands of any of the search parties of the Independents who after the battle scoured the country for many weeks. On the contrary, after joining with several other noblemen in an ineffectual effort once more to raise the standard of Charles in Scotland, he succeeded in withdrawing with his young wife, and joining the King in Holland. Upon the Restoration in 1662 he was among those who were triumphantly restored to their honors and estates. His return to Scotland with his wife and young family did not, however, happen until a terrible fate, the result of his crafty ambition, and the reward for the part which he had taken in the death of Charles I., had ended the life of Argyle.* Shortly after Montrose's return to his family possessions Neil Guthrie was duly installed in the honorable and no longer sinecure position of factor, and his wife having

* When there was a proposal recently to erect a monument in Edinburgh to the Marquis of Argyle, the Marquis of Lorne furnished an American correspondent with a piece of information of peculiar interest. His lordship, it appears, during the repair of some tombs lately in the old chapel, the family burying-place, at Kilmun on Holy Loch, came upon the head of the executed marquis, the skull showing the hole by which it had been pierced by the pike on which it was impaled on the top of the gate.

inherited the greater part of the independence and effects of her aunt, the worthy Mrs. Murdoch of the Netherbow, he had every reason to consider himself a fortunate man, as fortune goes in this life.

THE END.

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